# CAPITALISM, SOCIALISM
## OR
# VILLAGISM
# ?

C.L.H.A 6873
C.L.H1 201

By

BHARATAN KUMARAPPA

With a foreword by

MAHATMA GANDHI

SHAKTI KARYALAYAM
ROYAPETTAH . . MADRAS

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FIRST EDITION: MAY 1946
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PRINTED ON HAND-MADE PAPER

*RUPEES*
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Printed By Shakti Press Ltd.,
115-E, Mowbray's Road, Royapettah, Madras,
For Shakti Karyalayam, Publishers, Madras, India

# FOREWORD

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Dr. Bharatan Kumarappa has, in his pages on "Villagism", a new word coined by him, furnished the lay reader and the village worker, not conversant with books on economics, a comparative and historical study of the modern movements known as Capitalism and Socialism, not excluding Marxism and Communism, and has earnestly, and I think convincingly shown, amongst other reasons advanced by him, that the past two wars of our generation have proved the utter bankruptcy of such economic orders. Incidentally, the wars seem to me to have proved the bankruptcy of war, meaning in forcible and naked language violence, which is not less because it is organised by states reputed to be civilized. Whether non-violence will effectively replace violence for keeping the peace of the world remains to be seen. Certain it is that mankind, if it continues along its mad career of exploitation of the weak by the strong, must rush to annihilation foretold in all religions. Dr. Bharatan Kumarappa shows that "Villagism" as it is being attempted in India, based as it is on truth and non-violence, is well calculated to avert the doom. If the reader is interested in the life-saving process, he must turn to the instructive pages written by Dr. Bharatan Kumarappa during his recent imprisonment.

M K Gandhi

Poona,
24-9-1945

"Men have seen the absurdity of today's civilisation which is based ... on economics and politics and its consequent militarism. Men have been losing their freedom and their humanity in order to fit themselves for vast mechanical organisations. So the next civilisation, it is hoped, will be based not merely upon economic and political competition and exploitation but upon world-wide social co-operation, upon spiritual ideals of reciprocity, and not upon economic ideals of efficiency ... These human beings who have been boastful of their power, and aggressive in their exploitation, who have lost faith in the real meaning of the teaching of their Master that the meek shall inherit the earth, will be defeated in the next generation of life. It is the same thing that happened in the ancient days, in the prehistoric times, to those great monsters like the mammoths and dinosaurs. They have lost their inheritance of the earth. They had the gigantic muscles for mighty efforts but they had to give up to creatures who were much feebler in their muscles and who took up much less space with their dimensions."

RABINDRANATH TAGORE
*in Personality, pp. 182-4*

# PREFACE

G.L.11|1

The aim of this book is to show for what exactly the movement for khadi (handspun, hand woven cloth) and village industries stands. I have called it Villagism, as in contrast with Capitalism which centres round capital, and Socialism round society and its needs, this movement centres round the village and its welfare. It seeks to build the economic life of the country by developing strong, self-reliant village units, the members of which will be bound together by mutual obligations and will co-operate with each other to make the unit prosperous and self-sufficient for all their essential needs. In the book, I have for the sake of convenience spoken of the unit under this new economy as the village. But this is not to be understood too literally. The unit may be, if necessary, even a group of adjacent villages.

If Socialism seeks for the prosperity of a whole nation in the mass, Villagism aims at the development of the smallest village unit and through it at the development of every member of it, even the very lowest and the least. If the tendency under Capitalism and under Socialism is towards greater and greater centralisation, this village movement distinguishes itself by turning away as far as possible from centralisation and looking to decentralisation as the chief means of developing the individual. It was therefore necessary to consider Capitalism and Socialism in order to show why this new economy is being proposed as against them. A chapter has been devoted to Imperialism, Fascism and Nazism which are the forms in which Capitalism has found expression in our day.

As this book has been written chiefly for village workers and other young men and women anxious to understand the main principles underlying this movement, it has seemed best to assume no knowledge of economic problems on the part of the reader, to include a description of what may be regarded as well-known facts, and to explain terms ordinarily in use in connection with the topics discussed. For the same reason in Chapter IV in the section entitled Village Economy in the Making, an attempt has been made chiefly to guide the village worker in his task keeping

in mind the limited resources available to him, rather than to suggest plans which can be put into effect only by the Government which is still not in our hands. Further, recommendations from the point of view of this new village economy, as to what the Government may do to revive economic life in our villages, have been made in the *Report of the Industrial Survey Committee of the Government of the Central Provinces and Berar*, Parts I and II, and *A Plan for the Economic Development of the North West Frontier Province* by J. C. Kumarappa (obtainable from the A. I. V. I. A., Wardha), and *The Gandhian Plan* by S. N. Agarwal, Padma Publications, Bombay. Readers interested in this side of the subject may turn to them with profit.

The philosophy underlying this village movement has found practical expression in the work of the All - India Spinners' Association which deals with textile production in villages, the work of the All - India Village Industries Association which concerns itself with some of the other main village industries, and that of the Hindustani Talimi Sangh which is concerned with education based on village crafts. Detailed information about these Associations may be had from their Headquarters at Wardha C. P.

Amongst books which will be found useful for obtaining a knowledge of the principles discussed here are *The Economics of Khadi*, and *Cent per cent Swadeshi* (both collections in the main of Gandhiji's articles in his journals, the *Young India* and the *Harijan*), to be had from the Navajivan, Publishing House, Ahmedabad; and *Why the village movement?* by J. C. Kumarappa, obtainable from the A. I. V. I. A., Wardha, C. P.

I am thankful to Gandhiji for his foreword and to my fellow political prisoners in jail, especially Sri Vinoba Bhave, Sri Kaka Kalelkar and Sri H. V. Kamat, who helped me with their criticisms and suggestions.

This book was written in 1944, but could not be published then owing to my being in detention. Since my release in 1945, I have touched it up in a few places to make the matter up to date. But essentially it remains as written in 1944.

*May, 1946* BHARATAN KUMARAPPA

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CHAPTER 1

# CAPITALISM

*Definition* :—It will suffice for our purposes to define Capitalism as an economic arrangement, where production and distribution of goods is carried on by individuals or groups of individuals, who use their stock of accumulated wealth for making more wealth for themselves. Two things are therefore essential for Capitalism—private capital and private profit.

## 1. Its Operation :

(*1*) *Centralisation* :—The way Capitalism operates is by means of huge sums of money, which it invests on machinery and raw materials, to produce on such a large scale that the costs of production being spread over a great number of goods, it can sell the articles much cheaper than if they were produced on a smaller scale. The larger the enterprise, it can compete more successfully and sell cheaper than its rivals. So the tendency is always towards further and further expansion of business, till today enterprise has become so huge that it is practically impossible for any one man to be its sole proprietor, however fabulously wealthy he may be, and it is passing more and more into the hands of combines, trusts, corporations, and cartels, which are powerful amalgamations of firms, which through such amalgamation gain control of well nigh the whole trade in that particular line in the country and even in the whole world. This is the same as saying that the movement under Capitalism is towards greater and greater centralisation, that is, towards bringing under some one central control what would otherwise have been disjointed efforts of independent producers. These several producers cease to exist, and their place is taken by a central body which then monopolises the entire production for itself.

(2) *Capital* :—Such centralised industry of course requires large capital. So money or credit, and enormous amounts of it are absolutely essential for its working. Those who can lend this money, or financiers, as this money-lender class is

called, thus come to exercise a very powerful influence over industry, as they can kill it by withholding money or help it by supplying the money when needed. Those who have little or no capital, on the other hand, have to wind up their business and become paid servants of large monied interests. The financiers fatten and live in luxury. Their only occupation is to lend money and make fabulous profits.

(3) *Machinery* :—As production becomes concentrated in one place, and aims to meet a country-wide if not world-wide demand, all the processes of manufacture of an article are studied with a view to increasing speed and efficiency, and various devices and machinery are invented for the purpose. As the machinery used for production thus becomes huge and complicated beyond measure, it is impossible for any one to enter on the task of production without such machinery, which is of course beyond the means of the average individual. Therefore, just as finance gets accumulated in the hands of a few who control industry, so also the tools of production leave the hands of innumerable craftsmen and become centralised in the mammoth machines of the factory.

Enormous expenditure on such machinery requires that production should be increased as much as possible, as it would be altogether uneconomical to spend much money on machinery and to produce only a few goods. And when production is therefore increased without limit, a large percentage of the income from the industry has to be spent on finding and maintaining markets, and on middlemen, freight, packing and advertisements as well as on high replacement costs, buildings and interest.

(4) *Labour* :—Because of all this heavy expenditure, wages are cut down to the minimum, by giving the labourers as low a wage as possible, or by reducing the number of workmen, or by replacing men by women and children who are content with lower wages. The result is that men become unemployed for this as well as other reasons. With growing unemployment labour becomes cheap and the capitalist's bargaining power increases, and labour is bought and sold like any commodity in the open market in accordance with the law of supply and demand, i. e., wage is fixed, not in accordance with what the

labourer requires for his maintenance but purely in the light of what he is prepared to take if he is not to starve.

(5) *Organisation :*—Large-scale enterprise of course implies a network of organisation—organisation for finance, for raw materials, for production and for marketing. When industry is in the hands of innumerable producers, each manages his own affairs independently and there is little need for organisation. But when it is concentrated in one centre, capital has to be raised for it from various quarters, raw materials gathered from the four corners of the earth, hundreds of people employed at the various stages of production, and the goods transported and distributed all over the world for sale. Industry thus ceases to be the effort of individuals here and there working unconnected with each other, and becomes the effort of a whole group of people functioning as an organised unit. Capitalism has thus brought about powerful organisations embracing in some cases the whole globe. And organisation means, of course, centralised control, so that all the activities connected with it are managed and directed by a small body at the centre.

Westerners are said to have a genius for organisation which probably means nothing more than that, owing to their economic system which has necessitated such intense centralisation, they have become used to acting as parts of a group rather than as individuals. When they are faced with a problem they, therefore, see it as something that has to be tackled by the group, and consequently in an organised manner. It is not that such a capacity is peculiar to them, for the caste system which survives in our country till today is a witness to the marvellous power of our ancestors for organisation and to our capacity for highly controlled group activity. It is only that our industrial system not having developed along centralised lines as in the West, we do not so readily combine in work as Westerners do.

## 2. The Merits of Capitalism :

(*A*) *In respect of principles on which it is based :*

(*1*) *Incentive provided by self-interest :*—Its chief merit lies in the fact that under this system the individual does his

best to make his enterprise a success. He is bound to do his utmost for it, as it is after all his enterprise and he expects to reap for himself the full benefit from it. Self-interest being one of the strongest motives in human life, when it is harnessed to production, as it is under Capitalism, it makes production very efficient. A man who works for his own profit, say, for example, a weaver who weaves and sells his own cloth, is not apt to sit idle at every available opportunity or be indifferent about design or quality of weaving, as a weaver who is paid by the day. The former tries to increase his output, improve his design, texture, etc., in order thus to increase his earnings, while the man who is paid by the day requires to be constantly watched if he is to work properly. There has, therefore, to be external force in the form of a foreman or supervisor to make the latter work. And even then there is little incentive for him to do his best and turn out work of good quality. Therefore, production for private profit would seem to be cheaper and more efficient than production where the individual does not expect to gain anything for himself from his work more than the stipulated daily wage. In so far as Capitalism is established on this fundamental fact, it is based on a sound and irrefutable characteristic of human behaviour as we know it today.

(2) *Competition:*—Secondly, under Capitalism, competition plays a very important part in keeping production up to the mark in regard to quality of output, speed, cheapness and such like. If, for example, the matches supplied by a factory are not as good or as cheap as those of another, soon the inefficient match factory will have to wind up its business, as no one will want to buy its matches. So firms compete with each other to produce the best they can and sell as cheap as possible. They cannot sell cheap unless they do everything possible to improve their machinery and technique, and cut down all unnecessary expenditure. Thus production under Capitalism tends, because of competition, to become economic and efficient.

(3) *Freedom:*—Thirdly, there is scope in Capitalism for an individual or a group of individuals with capacity to start, organise and run large enterprises. They are their own

masters and are free to carry on their business according to their own lights. This is one of the most attractive features of this system that the individual's freedom to work at whatever he chooses is recognised and made central. After all, of what use is it if an individual has all this world's riches and yet has no freedom to think and act for himself? Under the capitalist system where there is scope for initiative and enterprise, any one with capacity is thus encouraged to put his ability to effective use.

(*B*) * *In respect of its Achievements :*

Capitalism has, indeed, with the help of science and technical knowledge, transformed the world within the last century and a half. Amongst the various things we enjoy today—electric lights, radio, books, papers, cinemas, cars, buses, trams, railways, steamships, aeroplanes, cycles, cloths, silks, woollens, carpets, shoes, furniture, cooking utensils, crockery, spoons, cutlery, toys, toilet articles, medicines, hardware, grains, spices, fruits and drinks—for which of these do we not depend on capitalistic enterprise? Capitalism has made possible for the modern man a thousand conveniences unknown to an earlier age and a variety of goods gathered from the four corners of the earth, not procurable then even by kings. Taking our own villagers, for example, think of the choice they now have when they go shopping, say, to buy shirts or saris. Could the poor then buy cloth of such fine texture, colour and design, and in such a variety as today, when cloth is imported from various parts of the country and of the world, representing ingenious attempts of manufacturers to be original and to catch the fancy of the buyer? In this respect, Capitalism has indeed enriched the world in a variety of ways inconceivable to people of an earlier day.

(*C*) *In respect of the Virtues it engenders :*

(*1*) *Team spirit :*—Such organised work has brought certain virtues to the foreground, for instance, team-spirit or a desire to see one's group win whatever the cost to oneself,

* The merits described here under (B) & (C) are not peculiar to Capitalism but belong to it as a matter of fact only because of large-scale production, which is possible also under Communism or Socialism.

keeping together as a group through thick and thin, and not letting down one's colleagues come what may. It has for this reason been said that England's battles were won on the playing fields of Eton. People who have been trained from childhood to work together as a team are likely to know how to cooperate with others in later life. And in such unity, of course, there is strength. Indeed, one of the secrets of British success is precisely that, more especially in times of crisis, everybody forgets his differences and plunges headlong together unquestioningly, allowing himself to be led by the leader in whatever is to be done.

(2) *Discipline and order* :—If the group is to work thus as one man, it means that the members composing it must be well disciplined. The individual must curb his own desires in the interests of the group. He must obey orders implicitly. But this cannot be without discipline. So such discipline with its corollary, respect for rule and order, has been a striking characteristic of capitalistic civilisation.

One of the criticisms levelled against us is that we are undisciplined and tend to pull each his own way. That is because our industrial order not being of the centralised type, there was no occasion till now for our combining together for work. Our artisans produced on an individualistic or decentralised basis, and that being so, there was little or no need for disciplined, organised activity, and therefore for method, order or rule. When, however, work is carried on in a centralised manner, as in Capitalism, everything has to be done systematically according to a prescribed pattern; otherwise there will be chaos and confusion. So, along with discipline, Capitalism has developed a certain orderly way of life and conduct—a certain love for methodical and systematic behaviour.

(3) *Punctuality* :—As a direct result of this has developed a sense of punctuality, an idea of working to time. It rises essentially out of an economic order which necessitates a large number of people working together. Such a system would break down if people did not assemble and start together at the prescribed time. They cannot afford, as under an individualistic or decentralised economic order, to do their work or stop when they wish. Time, therefore, plays an important role

and punctuality becomes a necessary virtue. The leisurely ways of our people are due to our not being sufficiently industrialised.

(4) *Interdependence:*—As under a capitalist economy industry becomes highly specialised, each aspect of it being attended to by a separate body of individuals—raw material producers, financiers, engineers, factory managers, clerks, labourers, shippers, railwaymen, agents, advertisers, salesmen, shop-keepers and consumers—it has tended to emphasise man's dependence on his fellowmen, and that not merely within the limits of a nation but embracing the whole world. The villager of our country is tied up with the doings of people in Britain, Germany, America, Japan and other parts of the world. His raw materials control the prosperity of the peoples of other countries, and, in return, he depends on them for their manufactured goods. Prices of commodities in Australia, Egypt or Canada, immediately influence prices in India, and a slight drop in the value of the pound or the dollar affects millions of people in our country, bringing them ruin, or leading them to prosperity. This interdependence of the peoples of the world, their being brought close together, and being bound up with each other has been one of the achievements of Capitalism which is essentially international in its working. Philosophers and religious teachers had taught that the world was one family, but the capitalist order has established this truth as a matter of every day life, at least in the economic realm.

## 3. The Evils of Capitalism:

### (A) *General:*

*Introductory:*—Much as there is that is attractive and praiseworthy in Capitalism, there is also a great deal in it that must make us pause and consider. In the last century, when it was in its youth, it dazzled the world by its achievements. It based itself on the liberty of the individual, an idea which moved vast crowds to the guillotine at the time of the French Revolution. Making the liberty of the individual the rock-bottom of the economic order, it brought about such amazing results, that it won its way into the hearts of all. But with the turn of the century, all was not well.

Already Capitalism had overshot itself and within a few years the world was plunged in war, and then into a trade-slump, unemployment, and another war, in whose throes we are today. It is becoming more and more obvious that the economic evils of our day are due to the capitalistic system which will have either to be given up or thoroughly transformed if humanity and civilisation are to survive. We today are in a better position to adjudge the true worth of Capitalism than those of the last century, as Capitalism had not then developed to its fullest. It had thrived and borne abundant fruit in Britain which was the first to take to large-scale production. But now, when other countries have also industrialised themselves, British markets are steadily shrinking, and each country wants to produce on a sufficiently large scale to meet its own requirements and even to capture world trade for itself. This leads inevitably to over-production, economic dislocation, unemployment, war and bloodshed.

(*1*) *Selfishness* :—We have already seen that the capitalist order is based on the idea that the sole purpose of an economic system is acquisition of wealth for oneself. Why economic enterprise alone is degraded thus it is difficult to see, for in no profession do we respect a man who is motivated solely with the desire to make money. A doctor, an administrator, or a teacher who does his work only for money, hardly wins our respect. Perhaps it is for this reason that the merchant class, whether in the East or in the West, is held in less esteem than the priest, doctor, teacher or soldier, in whom a certain amount of unselfishness or nobility of purpose is assumed. The merchant is thought to care for nothing other than profit for himself. And yet, this need hardly be so, for after all a merchant is as necessary for the community as a priest or a soldier, and his vocation, therefore, can be as noble if only it were controlled to an extent by the service motive. But no. Capitalism has degraded trade and commerce to the utmost in that it has given unlimited scope for the desire for private profit. Whoever is capable of making wealth for himself is at full liberty to do so. Under the garb of not interfering with the freedom of individuals, it has given complete range to selfishness and greed. Naturally, everybody living under this system

tends to be selfish and to grab as much as possible for himself.

(2) *Loot* :—Between individuals, if a man takes to himself what rightly belongs to another, he is considered a thief; but when it is done in an organised manner as under the capitalist system, he passes for a respectable member of society, although the crime in this case is many times worse, as it involves deliberate and systematic misappropriation of what really belongs to innumerable people. Rightly, the profits of industry should go, more or less in equal proportion, to all engaged in it—financiers, entrepreneurs and labourers. But when financiers and entrepreneurs fatten and labourers live on the verge of starvation, it is obvious that the former are taking to themselves much more of the profits than their share. The capitalist invests his idle money in industry, and without raising so much as his little finger to help in the actual work of production, reaps a rich harvest, while the labourer who works day in and day out by the sweat of his brow is given but a bare pittance as his share of the income. In this respect, Capitalism is essentially unjust and amounts to sheer predation and plunder. It arose in Europe as the direct descendant of feudalism, under which the robber barons who were powerful swept down from their strongholds, plundered the neighbouring hamlets from time to time to recoup their wealth, and forced the villagers to pay them tribute if they wanted to be free from attacks. When the Industrial Revolution came about in Europe with the use of machinery, and when, at the same time, enormous hoards were disgorged from India and taken to Europe, these feudal barons gave place to financial magnates, who, in their turn, set up an organisation similar in many respects to the feudal system by which they were able to garner in the profits as the feudal lords garnered in the tributes. The procedure was just as predatory, taking to themselves because of the power that wealth gave them, what really was not their due.

(3) *Internal Strife* :—But such exploitation cannot always go unhampered. When the labourer is ignorant, poor and unorganised, he submits. But soon there comes a time when he is not prepared to take meekly whatever the capitalist

deigns to give him. He begins to assert his rights and the industrial world is torn with dissension and strife. Conflict between two powerful sections of the people—capital and labour—grows and develops, and there appears to be little prospect of its being settled peaceably under Capitalism.

(4) *Imperialism* :—Not content with exploitation at home, the capitalist turns his greedy eyes to the ends of the earth for cheap sources of raw materials and for ready markets for his goods. Consequently, he annexes vast territories of the world under various pretexts, or by high finance controls those places and their governments. He sees that they supply him cheap raw materials for his factories and he prevents them from producing their own manufactured goods, for otherwise he will lose a market for his products. Capitalism thus leads inevitably to imperialism and enslavement of weaker peoples. In this process, of course, moral considerations are out of place and when professed are meant only as a smoke screen. The only thing that matters is profit.

(5) *Revolt* :—Once again, however, exploitation does not go unchallenged. The subject races rise in revolt. They refuse to be bled white for the foreigner, and a narrow rampant nationalism is born whose sole aim is to drive out the hated foreigner and to put an end to the empire.

(6) *War* :—Nay more, the empire being a preserve of one industrial nation, other countries who have also succeeded in industrialising themselves view it with envy. They covet its raw material sources, its markets, cheap labour and its opportunities for safe investment. They want some of it for themselves. The result is a world war where industrialised nations are lined up against each other to see who is to hold the weaker nations. All the resources made possible by capitalist enterprise are thrown into the fray. Each side puts forth the noblest slogans, pretending that the war is fought for establishing a new order of freedom and prosperity, or for upholding democracy, hoping thus to deceive people into joining them. The unfortunate labourer who in life slaved for the capitalist is now doped with high ideals, and he readily becomes gun-fodder to die for the greed of his master. The capitalist must have his gold, howsoever many streams of

blood flow in the process. Thus world wars give place to more world wars, growing in their intensity and tending to wipe out whole peoples and civilisations. Unless something radical is done to Capitalism, it would seem that through it humanity is likely to be wiped out.

Evidently, uncontrolled selfishness is the worst possible basis for an economic order, for it leads inevitably to the law of the jungle, nay worse, to put it in the language of the Bhagavad Gita, to the establishment of a world of demons, where men in their greed for gain become worse than brutes and compete with each other in fraud, deception, inhuman cruelties and world-wide exploitation and destruction.

To illustrate, let us consider briefly the way in which Capitalism operates in the field of production and consumption, more especially from the point of view of the effect it has on human beings.

(*B*) *Special* :

**1. Production :**

(A) The Worker :

(*1*) *Enslavement* :—As under Capitalism production is carried on with the aid of huge machines operated by individuals, the workmen under this system lose their independence and become paid servants. As, besides, they have no access to the instruments of production, they are quite helpless unless the capitalist employs them. Thus their slavery becomes complete. They have to cringe, bow and scrape if they are to remain in employment. And as only a few are the owners of the machines, the bulk of the people, being either labourers or employees, tend under Capitalism to lose the sturdy independence of their fathers and become, instead, slaves to do another's bidding.

(*2*) *Helplessness and insecurity* :—When work was on a small scale there was scope for initiative and enterprise. The success of an individual depended on his own efforts. But today under industrialism the small producer has become a plaything of forces beyond his control. At one time he rides on the crest of prosperity and obtains wealth he had never dreamt of, and at another he is thrown into a depression when

he loses his all for no fault of his. Formerly, natural disasters like famine, drought, frost, flood or earthquake, upset the even tenor of his life. But today, worse than these and in addition to them, are bank crashes, company failures, trade cycles and slumps caused by economic policies followed by monied interests. He can no more be sure of his future than a leaf floating on the surface of a running stream. Honest, thrifty and industrious though he be, he is fearful of what the morrow may bring forth. He lives thus in a state of insecurity, helplessness, and nervous tension, and has little incentive to work hard and get on in life.

(3) *Unemployment*:—The lot of the labourer in large-scale enterprise is not any better. Slumps and trade depressions caused by monetary policies or by overproduction may necessitate the closing down of the factory which employs him and his consequent unemployment. A new labour saving device may mean his services being dispensed with. Nor can it be so glibly argued, as it used to be formerly, that as industrialism generally stimulates further and further industrial development, if he is thrown out of work by improvements in machinery in one industry, he will be absorbed in some other new industry. Industrial expansion connot go on indefinitely. It was true in the days that followed the Industrial Revolution in England that those who were thrown out of work by the new machines were rapidly absorbed in the growing industries of the country. But this was a temporary phase. Today, when industrialism has spread to include the manufacture of every conceivable article, and has extended to many parts of the world, large machines mean more and more people being thrown out of employment and left without hope of being absorbed in fresh industrial enterprises. Even now when vast areas of Asia, Africa and South America remain unindustrialised, countries like the United States of America, and Britain in spite of her empire markets, have not been able through large-scale industry to employ their comparatively small populations. In 1934, for example, over 11 million were unemployed in the United States, for whom 17 million dollars had to be spent by the Government on unemployment relief,

and Britain's unemployed numbered over 3 million.* In 1940, Britain spent almost 22 million pounds on unemployment doles although unemployment must have considerably decreased that year owing to the War.† If this be so now, it would seem that when other countries become industrialised, and human labour is more and more everywhere substituted by huge machines, capitalist large-scale production must collapse inevitably, as it cannot give employment except to a fraction of the world's population.

(4) *Poverty* :—Consequently, as Capitalism advances, the poor become poorer, for not all of them can secure employment; the rich grow richer, for with less and less to pay in the way of wages, the profits of the industry go more and more into the pockets of the owners of the machines. As the owners are few and the labourers are many, naturally the tendency is for wealth to be dammed in the hands of the few, leaving the many to live from hand to mouth. In the United States of America " In April 1940, 17,937,000 people (or nearly one-seventh of the population) were receiving one or more forms of public relief from Federal, State or local agencies, according to the estimates of the Social Security Board." * It is said that before the present War, in the United States, 1 p. c. of the people received 20 p. c. of the national income, 10 p. c. received 40 p. c., while the poorest 25 p. c. went with only 3½ p. c. In England, Sir Richard Acland quoting Colin Clark observes that in 1934, 1½ p. c. of the people drew 25 p. c. of the national income, 8½ p. c. obtained 25 p. c., and the remaining 90 p. c. had to live on only 50 p. c. of the total income. What is striking is that these figures for 1934 were definitely worse than the figures for 1913. This is only to be expected, for the more Capitalism advances, the more wealth accumulates in fewer hands, reducing an ever greater number of people to poverty.

Besides, we have already seen that under large-scale production, big industry has a way of combining together to

* *American Federationist*, Dec., 1935, article entitled " Why 22 million people are on relief."

† *The Statesman's Year book*, 1941, p. 33.

* *The Statesman's Year book*, 1942, p. 502.

swallow up all the smaller ones, making the distribution of wealth still more uneven. Thus, it is said that in the United States of America, two millionaire houses, viz., the Morgan and Rockfeller groups, alone together held 341 directorships in 112 banks, railways, insurance and other corporations, having aggregate resources under their control of $ 22,245,000,000, and that the entire business of the United States was controlled by twelve men.* This tremendous wealth was controlled by a few firms in New York City and yet, alongside of them till war came to their rescue, hundreds and thousands of poverty-stricken, unemployed people dragged themselves along the streets of that city in search of work and bread, so much so that New York City, the abode of billionaires, won for itself the name of "hunger town." Fabulous wealth for a few on the one hand, starvation and misery for the many on the other, dinners without appetites at one end and appetites without dinners at the other.

This statement sounds exaggerated, for after all the standard of living of the worker in the industrialised countries of the world is much higher than it was prior to industrialisation. The worker is able to afford many more comforts and conveniences than he could formerly. Indeed, labourers in England often live in greater comfort than the well-to-do in India. How, then, can it be said that industrialisation under Capitalism has led to poverty? On the other hand, is not industrialisation being advocated in our country precisely to put cheap goods and a variety of them into the hands of the masses, and to find profitable employment for them?

In answer to this, it must be pointed out that it is necessary to look beyond those immediatly connected with the industry if we would judge of its effects.

Firstly, what does it matter if a few earn Rs. 2 or Rs. 3 a day from it, if in the process they have deprived hundreds of craftsmen of their means of livelihood? The wealth that may have been earned in small amounts by a hundred artisans has been taken away in order to give the higher earnings to a few factory hands and to swell the bank account of the factory

* James Truslow Adams: *The Epic of America*, 1940, p. 344.

owner. But from the point of view of the people as a whole it has brought poverty and unemployment, since, as compared with the few employed in the industry, hundreds have been deprived of their subsistence.

Secondly, if the people of England can afford many comforts and conveniences, it is only because they have impoverished us by monopolising production and keeping it in their own hands. Their higher standard of living, as well as the standard of living of the other industrialised countries of the world, has been made possible only by the unprecedented poverty and distress they have brought about in the industrially backward countries. No one, it would seem, can be rich under Capitalism without in that very fact having made his neighbour poor.

Thirdly, it is doubtful if, as is generally assumed, a high standard of living signifies wealth or prosperity. A person can truly be said to be wealthy when he is able to afford all that he wants. If his needs are increased artificially by the variety of goods thrown out by large-scale production, his higher earning power leaves him, if anything, poorer than formerly, for he now spends it on a multiplicity of goods, and even then there are many things he would like to have which he cannot afford. Rs. 50 in our villages suffice to live in comfort, but even Rs. 150/- may not be enough in Bombay because of the many more demands on one's money in that city. A man earning Rs. 150/- in Bombay may therefore be really poorer than one earning Rs. 50/- in the village, who has enough for his wants. We must not therefore be dazzled by possessions in judging a man's state of prosperity. The capitalistic West desirous of finding a market for its goods has inculcated in people a love of multiplicity of possessions; but it is folly to fall into this snare, for the more you increase your wants, the more you are left in want. As after all prosperity is a matter of having enough to satisfy one's wants, the fewer one's wants the nearer one is to prosperity. But this does not mean of course that we are to revert to primitivism or adopt the ascetic way of life, but only that surrounding oneself with a variety of goods does not indicate prosperity. One can well live in health, comfort and decency

without the innumerable things that the Westerners would have us get used to. It is wrong therefore to mistake a high standard of living for prosperity.

In view of all this, it is apparent that for the masses of the world taken as a whole industrialisation under Capitalism has meant more and more poverty, even if for a few it has meant a higher standard of comfort and convenience obtained at the expense of the many.

(5) *Disease and Vice* :—As large-scale enterprise employs hundreds of workers, and the factories are situated in large towns or centres where houses are few and rents are high, it has meant labourers living crowded together in single tenement rooms under the most insanitary conditions. As, besides, many of them leave their women folk behind in villages, and have little or no recreation or amusements, these slums have become hot-beds of disease, immorality, drink, gambling and other vice. Children brought up in this environment have hardly any regard for morality or decency and develop criminal tendencies.

(6) *Crime* :—Under the circumstances, naturally, there is an increase in crime and lawlessness. America, industrially the most advanced country in the world, has become notorious for its gangsters and their depradations. To combat organised loot by industrialists, crime has organised itself into a formidable power for evil and uses the latest technique of scientific knowledge. The industrialist knows no law, nor does the gangster. Law appears to the gangster to be nothing but a means devised by the capitalist for his own protection and for keeping the worker in subjection. So he breaks it when he can with impunity.

(7) *Class hatred* :—Labour resents bitterly being used as a means to gratify the capitalist's lust for power and wealth. The labourer feels that the wealth he produces goes unjustly to fill the coffers of the idle rich while he and his family have to do with the minimum to keep body and soul together. The luxuries in which the rich indulge—their clothes, food, houses, cars, servants, clubs, travel and amusements—fill him with envy. So he organises himself against the capitalist to wrest what he can for himself and his colleagues. He makes

use of the weapon of strikes to paralyse industry. Man turns against his fellowman, and the country is divided against itself. There seems little hope of a solution to this problem under Capitalism, for under it there will always be the exploiter and the exploited classes. For Capitalism, as we have already seen, exists merely for making as much wealth as possible for oneself, and wealth cannot be made in large quantities for oneself without it being taken away from some-one else, who then is left disgruntled and waits for the day of vengeance.

(8) *Greed for Money*:—As the whole structure of Capitalism rests on money, it has created in people an undue craving for material wealth. It is the man with money who commands respect, exercises power and can obtain whatever he wants. Acquisition of money or material wealth has therefore become the goal of man, all other values—moral, aesthetic or religious—paling into insignificance.

Such then are the increasingly disastrous results which capitalistic production has on the mental, moral and economic condition of the working class. Let us now consider its effect on the capitalist himself.

(B) The Employer:

His only concern being to produce as much wealth as possible for himself, he makes use of every means available for realising his purpose, unmindful of all other considerations.

(1) *Is Wasteful*:—

(a) *Produces regardless of demand*:—In his eagerness to make profits, he increases his business quite regardless of whether there is demand for his goods. This leads to many disastrous consequences. He manufactures, for instance, reams and reams of paper, depending only on the capacity of his machines. And then, by fair means or foul, he forces his way into the market; and by cut-throat competition, whereby he brings ruin to his rivals, he obtains a market, even though it be at a loss, hoping later to make good after he has established himself. Such production, which aims at destroying competitors and wrecking going enterprises, is a national waste, but is done merely with the hope of amassing wealth for oneself. It does not increase production by any means.

On the other hand, after ruining his competitors, the capitalist often reduces output in order to put up his prices. Nor does he, in order to maintain high prices, hesitate to destroy tons of wheat and coffee, or dump waggons of apples and milk into the sea, while thousands of people in various parts of the world are starving. He destroys capital goods and checks and sabotages production by others. In all this there is not the slightest thought of meeting any existing demand. He who can, produces. The result is over-production during a boom period, followed by slump and depression, when supplies exceed demand, and unemployment and misery for many. As the system knows neither plan nor control, it breaks down from time to time, to be revived artificially for a brief period, only to collapse again. So long as the capitalist makes his pile during the boom, he is prepared to lie low during the depression. What does he care if all this entails untold suffering and waste to the nation?

(*b*) *Manufactures unnecessary articles*:—As the capitalist's sole aim in production is profit, he produces all kinds of fancy articles hoping by advertisement and clever salesmanship to create an artificial demand for them. The natural procedure is for supply to direct itself to meet an existing demand. I want rice and the cultivator produces it. There the matter ends, and there is no need for forced sales. But I may not need a tonic at all. Nevertheless, it is produced as a possible way of making money. And to make me want it, propaganda is carried on in its praise in so alluring a manner that I fall a victim and buy it. The capitalist makes his profit, but my money and the time, labour and material used in making the tonic have been wasted.

As the one aim in production is profit, the capitalist produces primarily for people who have the means of payment and who will therefore part with their money easily. What is the use of catering to the wants of the poor who have no money to buy? So production is directed to the manufacture of luxury goods.

Or, turning to other lands, the capitalist makes use of the missionary to push up sales of his wares. The missionary acts as a "civilising" influence. He makes the "barbarian" use

tweeds, shoes, socks, collar, neck-tie, crockery, cutlery and what not. These may be decided encumbrances in a tropical climate, and certainly he can live quite happily without them. But unless the "barbarian" uses these unnecessary articles, how is the capitalist to obtain his profit? So the cry is to civilise the barbarian and raise his standard of living. Whatever is produced for him, and generally for the poor and ignorant, is of a kind that is gaudy, attractive and cheap, but which becomes useless in no time. In fact, the more flimsy the article the better for the capitalist, for the sooner it goes out of use the quicker it will have to be replaced.

Production is thus directed to the manufacture of all kinds of useless fancy goods and luxury articles, curios, toys, trinkets, scents, face-powders, lip-sticks, vanity-cases, hair oils, ribbons and laces, and people are lured into buying them.

(c) *Wastes Natural Resources* :—The capitalist's only concern being to make as much profit as possible for himself, he cares little for the country or its future, and uses up its natural resources—forests, oil, coal and other minerals—heedless of what will happen in the future when these limited resources are exhausted.

So unmindful is the capitalist of all considerations other than his own, that production with the motive of private gain far from being the most economic and efficient, as we proclaimed it to be, considering it purely from the point of view of theory, shows itself in actual practice to be far from being so. It entails far too much waste and duplication of effort as too many people compete to produce the same things or perform the same service.

(2) *Resorts to bribery* :—The capitalist uses his money to gain his end by hook or by crook. He stops short of nothing that will serve his purpose. Moral scruples will certainly not deter him, for, after all, business is business. It has nothing to do with morality. So he resorts to bribery, corruption and deception as required. A neat cheque to a Government officer gets him an oil lease on favourable terms, or a generous contribution to party funds sends his friends to power, who naturally remain under obligation to him and seek, while in office, to do him a good turn.

(3) *Regiments people's minds* :—By means of his money, he controls the press, the school, the university, the radio, even the church, to instil into the people such ideas as suit him, and ruthlessly keeps out all others. As under centralised production work for the average man is of a kind that does not involve any thinking, the individual under such a system, not having had opportunities for thinking for himself, falls a ready prey to the capitalist-inspired propaganda. Not only the factory hand, but also the Government officer, the University professor, and the newspaper editor ; for they also, as practically the entire nation, are no more than his employees who dare not think except in accordance with his wishes. All forms of regimentation are bad enough, but of them all, intellectual regimentation appears to be the worst as it takes away from a man what is his most precious possession, viz., the capacity to think for himself. Tragic, indeed, sound these words of a poet, but unfortunately they are all too true under Capitalism :

"The thought I think I think is not my thought,
But the thought of one
Who thought I ought to think his thought."

(4) *Controls nations by finance* :—We have already said that the capitalist makes much wealth through money-lending. He loans large sums to private bodies and governments, and threatening to withdraw his help and bring about their collapse if they refuse to do his bidding, he controls them in accordance with what suits his interests. He wields thus a powerful influence not only in his own country but even over governments of other countries, who, having borrowed money from him, have fallen within his clutches. This is the invisible empire of high finance—a new kind of empire controlled by loans as effectively as by the bayonet, and enslaving entire countries, holding them in subjection and exploiting them without bothering with the details of administration. As a result of the present War, it would appear that the whole world is in danger of being mortgaged thus to America.

(5) *Makes nations spend money on armaments* :—The capitalist has money in various forms of enterprise, including the armament trade, ship-building and aeroplane industries.

That being so, he is eager that nations should not disarm and settle their quarrels peaceably. On the other hand, these interests which fatten on the manufacture of weapons of death and destruction deliberately stir up war scares and appeal to patriotism in various countries—whether belonging to the allied or the enemy camp—for huge sums to be spent by their governments on munitions, ship-building and aeroplane manufacture. They line their pockets with gold thus, but at what cost? —the innocent lives of thousands of young men, and wholesale destruction of property all the world over. Most of the wealth made possible by scientific knowledge and large-scale enterprise is employed thus in manufacturing weapons of destruction. Where, then, is the gain for the people from the much boosted large-scale enterprise?

(6) *Uses public money for his protection*:—With his business expanding into foreign markets, it becomes necessary to protect the sea-lanes on which his goods pass. He therefore pleads for a strong navy, and to protect him and his property abroad he requires an army and air-force. The army, the navy and the air-force exist thus primarily for his benefit, but they are paid for out of public funds. So charitable are governments obliged to be to industrial interests. And, as for the business magnate, he not only reaps a rich harvest from foreign trade but also from ship-building, munitions and aeroplane manufacture incidental to giving him protection. He is thus twice blest: He gets these privileges at public cost and on top of it makes money for himself out of it!

(7) *Plunges nations into war*:—We have already seen that the capitalist who is expanding his business, and is therefore in search of raw materials, markets, cheap labour, and opportunities for safe investment, comes up against highly industrialised countries who have already taken possession of industrially backward countries for the purposes of exploitation. There are not then left for him any worlds to conquer. This position is intolerable if he is to get on with his business. The more capitalistic production advances the more it requires control over the whole world—over land, over sea and over air. Such world power whereby to drive out all rivals and obtain a monopoly for oneself is becoming more and more necessary if

capitalistic industry, which has outgrown the bounds of any one country, is to survive. Naturally, these wars are started by industrialists to upset the *status quo* and see if, in the general confusion, they can obtain possession of some spheres of exploitation for themselves.

Moreover, large-scale manufacture turns out so much more goods than needed, that if foreign markets for the goods manufactured are not available, the only way to keep the factories going and the workers employed is to start a war. For war is a bottomless pit which can consume endless men and material. If not for war, factories in capitalistic countries which have no foreign markets will soon have to close down or, at least, limit production to such an extent as to cause financial ruin for the capitalist, and unemployment and starvation for the workers. A war, therefore, becomes a necessity if the capitalist is to continue to make profits and the labourer to be kept in employ.

Besides, the armament trade, as we have already said, requires war for its very existence. So it is intensely interested in fomenting trouble.

The result is that wars have become a regular feature of capitalistic civilisation. One world war ends only to prepare for another fiercer and more terrible, and there seems no hope whatsoever of establishing peace and goodwill among men, so long as the germs of war lie at the very heart of capitalistic economy. As war is thus undertaken today chiefly in the interests of large-scale capitalist industry, when each warring nation pours out its wealth in terms of millions of pounds a day and has in addition its valuable property demolished in large quantities by the enemy, the greater part of the fabulous cost of such periodic wars and of the maintenance, even during peace of the army, navy, air-force, and military, naval and air-bases, and of payment of war pensions for the disabled, and for widows and orphans, and interest on war debt, must be taken into account in computing, even from the purely economic point of view, the soundness of this capitalistic economy. When this is done, as indeed in any scientific view of the matter it should be, and due allowance is made for social services incidental to industrialism, such as

housing to prevent over-crowding in slums, provision of recreational facilities for workers, sanitation, health, insurance, maternity benefits, old age pensions and unemployment relief, large-scale capitalistic industry would appear to be the most expensive form of production the world has ever known, appearing under a mask of cheapness only because a great part of its expenses is paid illegitimately out of public revenue. In this respect, posterity may well look upon those who pride themselves today on being the foremost industrialised capitalistic nations of the world as the most foolish in human history.

Further, considering the effect of war on the life of the people, it is obvious that if even during peace the standard of life of the vast masses of the world leaves much to be desired, this standard becomes alarmingly low in times of war. Thus, in regard to food, it is well known that belligerent nations have to tighten their belts and endure much hardship and privation. They do with very little meat, eggs, milk, sugar, and content themselves with the small amounts rationed out to them. As for subject nations like ourselves, Bengal in recent months is a telling illustration of starvation, disease and death that war can bring about even before it enters the land. Besides, people everywhere are forced to work long hours without holiday and to do various forms of service whether they like it or not.

What is infinitely worse, the brute in man is let loose violating all moral codes and conventions. Dishonesty, cruelty, selfishness, racial bitterness and mutual suspicion are rampant, and man slays fellowman ruthlessly, and destroys whole cities killing overnight innocent men, women and children. The effect of such barbarism is not short-lived. It leaves scars on the minds and hearts of people which do not easily heal. The savage of old was civilised as compared with the fiend into which man has developed under industrialism. With what face can we claim that in the sphere of human relationships and moral development, our standard of life has risen through centralised large-scale production? In this respect, and, it is this respect that chiefly matters, it would be true to say that industrialisation under Capitalism far from raising

man's standard of life has definitely lowered it to a degree unimaginable by the savage of old.

Thus, then, considered from the point of view of human values, does production under centralised capitalistic methods, based as it is on gross selfishness and greed, enslave and corrupt a whole people, employee and employer alike, and lead to exploitation, and hatred and strife at home and abroad resulting in war, destruction and death.

**2) Consumption :**

While admitting that capitalistic production has been responsible for much evil, it may be thought that at least in regard to the innumerable things that it has made possible for the consumer, it must be declared to be a blessing. But let us see.

In the first place, it is not so much Capitalism that has made a multitude of things possible as centralised large-scale industry, and such large-scale manufacture is possible also under Communism or Socialism.

(*1*) *No scope for creative use of faculties :—*

What develops a person is what exercises his thought, will and aesthetic sense. Our faculties grow only with use. Nature has decreed that an organ which is not put to use shall wither and die. But under the centralised economy of Capitalism, there is not much scope for the exercise of the individual's thought, will and aesthetic sense in consumption, for he is limited in choice to standardised articles turned out in their thousands by factories. All the scope that standard articles provide for the exercise of the individual's faculties is the passive one of choosing which of the ready-made articles he will have.

(*a*) *Ready-made foods :—* Take for instance food. Ready-made foods such as shredded wheat, cornflakes, soups, meat dishes, fish, vegetables, pickles, cheese, butter, milk, biscuits, cakes, sweets and preserved fruits are obtainable packed in containers—all ready for use without cooking. They are produced on a mass scale and sold so cheap that it is often more expensive in Western countries to buy the raw materials for them from the market and cook them in the house. Such

stale food cannot have the nutritive value of fresh food. Nor is there the possibility of expressing one's individuality in the dishes one turns out. The consumer depends on others even for the preparation of his food, and thus tends to become helpless and resourceless. To make people buy, foods are given an attractive appearance, even if in the process they lose their nutritive value or become injurious to the human system. Wheat is whitened, rice polished, maize decorticated, oats rolled, barley pearled, milk chemically preserved, edible oils deodorised, and sugar refined. But considerations in regard to the injurious effect of over-processed foods on the health of people have little weight with those who are out to profit by large-scale centralised production, and the unwary customer falls a ready prey to the greed of the capitalist, and loses in consequence both his wealth and health.

(*b*) *Ready-made clothes* :—Similarly, in regard to clothes, the tendency is for mass manufacture to replace individual effort. Ready-made clothes of every style and description to suit all tastes and pockets are produced by the thousands. They are cut to standard sizes by machines and stitched in large numbers at a time in factories, and are therefore sold cheap. You cannot any more enjoy the luxury of having a suit made to fit you, unless you are prepared to pay through your nose. You must learn on the other hand to fit yourself into standardised garments. There is no scope therefore for the average consumer to make his clothes according to his own taste and requirements. He passively accepts one or other of what is available.

(*c*) *Ready-made houses* :—Not only for food and clothing, but even for houses the tendency today is for the consumer to depend on mass producers. For instance, in America when a house or a building is to be put up, one does not engage workmen to make every part of it before one's eyes according to one's instructions as usually happens in our country, but one places an order with architects who assemble ready-made parts from mass-producers and erect the building in no time. Naturally, the ready-made parts are of standard sizes and designs, and there is little scope for any one with ideas of his own to express them in the house he builds.

Thus, practically in every sphere, even in those which may be regarded as the most private and intimate, like food, clothing and shelter, mass production tends to oust individual enterprise, and consumption becomes mechanical and devoid of thought.

(2) *Two ways of luring the consumer* :—

To make the consumer buy, the capitalist makes use chiefly of two weapons : (a) advertisements and (b) fashions.

(*a*) *Advertisements* :—Business houses use every avenue possible to push sales of their goods. The radio, the printed word, placards, posters, signboards, moving lights, shop windows, cinemas, leaflets dropped from the air, and letters traced in the sky with smoke by aeroplanes, are all used to lure the people to buy. The psychology of the buyer is studied from every angle, and everything, including the manufacture and design of the article, its packing, the way it is exhibited, price, easy terms of sale, is done with such care to attract that it is very difficult for the unwary to resist its allurement. People often buy an article not needed by them merely because of all the good things which the advertisement says about them, or because it is 'cute, novel or quaint.

(*b*) *Fashions* :—Again, fashions are created to make people buy, and, as desire for the esteem of one's neighbours is an elemental passion with human beings, very few there are who can resist the desire to be in fashion. Fashions in footwear, fashions in jewelry and toilet articles, fashions in food and drink, fashions in crockery, silver, cutlery, fashions in furniture, and fashions in stationery. What is to happen when these fashions change from time to time? The old must give place to the new, even if it is good enough for use. The spoon may be oval at one time, but suddenly it is decided that it shall be round, and unless you are prepared to give up the race and face social contempt you scrape up your few pennies and invest them on a new spoon of the latest design. So in regard to everything—clothes, dining table, serviettes, dishes, cups, glasses, knives, furniture, carpets, curtains and what not.

All this is of course terribly wasteful. But what does that matter so long as it makes the people part with their

money to the capitalist ? If the same spoon can be used for eating your porridge, or drinking your soup, or consuming your pudding, why waste good metal, labour and time in manufacturing separate kinds of spoons for each of these operations ? It not only involves waste of national resources, but needless drudgery for the housewife who has to wash, dry and keep them stored away in good condition. But fashion decrees that separate kinds of spoons should be used for each of these purposes. Why ? —for no reason at all beyond that it makes for trade. And it is not only the spoon that is thus needlessly multiplied, but all the other paraphernalia connected with food, as well as clothes, toilet articles, furniture, and such like. It is easy for us who stand outside this mad game to see in it nothing but the capitalist's snare to trap customers. But once you get caught in it there is no way of escape.

(3) *Centralised marketing :—*

(*a*) *Department Stores :*—The wants thus artificially created are met by huge Department Stores which are shops having several floors where every conceivable article from a pin to a motor car is sold. Each such store is practically a market in itself. The only difference is that in a market there are several shops owned by separate individuals. But the Department Store is a single company which has swallowed up all the separate small shopkeepers, so that the profits which formerly went to innumerable shopkeepers now go to enrich the small group of business magnates which forms the Company.

(*b*) *Chain Stores :*—In addition to such huge Department Stores a new type of shop has arisen, called the chain store, where centralisation is carried still further. There a single company like that of Woolworths in New York runs a whole series of branches of itself in various parts of the city, or the country, or even the world. Articles are produced on a mass scale and distributed to these hundreds of branch shops, owned by this small group of people. Thus, not only does manufacture get into the hands of a few under Capitalism, but also sales, and an abundant harvest is reaped by a few

shareholders. Where this intense monopoly and centralisation will finally lead, it is difficult to say, but the tendency undoubtedly is for a handful to garner in the bulk of the wealth, ousting innumerable petty shopkeepers and taking their place.

(4) *Masses enslaved by high standard of living:—*

Through such a network of organisation, drive and energy, the capitalist pushes far and wide the sales of the variety of goods he turns out. The man in the street is unable to resist their allurement and he buys as much of them as he can. His life becomes elaborate, and looking upon needless luxuries as necessities he works all the harder to maintain this artificial standard of living. Indeed, through thus raising the standard of living of the wage-earner the capitalist profits doubly, firstly by the fact that thus his goods find a ready sale ; and secondly, by the fact that once the wage-earner has become used to a high standard of living he is not so easily inclined to leave his job, go on strikes, or fight for his rights. As his wants have been multiplied, he cannot afford to be too independent, and consequently he becomes a slave to his employer. Why is it, for instance, that high placed Government officers are the last in India to fight for the freedom of the motherland ? Their standard of living is high, and what will happen to their families if their thousand rupees is not forthcoming every month ? We must beware therefore of the cry for a high standard of living, when it comes from interested industrialists, or highly industrialised exploiter countries and their Governments. Far better a life of simplicity and independence, and self-respect and contentment therewith. A man whose needs are few such as can be met by himself can afford to raise his head high and refuse to bow to any power which seeks to enslave him. Not so the man with the so-called high standard of living. Every new luxury he adopts becomes an additional fetter preventing him from freedom of thought, movement and action. Of what use is a multiplicity of possessions if in the acquisition of it he becomes a slave ? The people of the capitalistic industrialised countries of the world have a high standard of living, but only at the cost of forfeiting their freedom more and more to the capitalist.

(5) *Recreation of the people demoralised:—*

As under large-scale enterprise production leaves the hands of the masses and they become merely passive consumers of what is supplied to them by centralised manufacture, so their recreation also under the capitalistic order is of a kind that is passive and does not exercise the individual's powers. It is usual to argue that, under centralised production, the worker will have plenty of leisure, so that even if his work is too mechanical to develop his faculties, he will have the opportunity during his leisure to devote himself to study and art if he so chose. But in this "if" lies the whole difficulty. A man whose head and heart have been starved in his occupation does not as a matter of fact choose to spend his leisure in study and art. For it is work that develops his powers, and when his faculties have been deadened through mechanical factory work he does not as a matter of fact find pleasure in exercising them. And therefore his leisure is spent, as any one may see in the streets of big industrial cities like New York, London or Bombay, in wandering aimlessly up and down the streets, looking at people and shop-windows, or riding in a bus, or watching foot-ball matches and other sports, or sitting in cinemas or theatres, or listening to the radio, or reading newspapers which, besides filling his idle mind with thrills aud sensations, spoon-feed him with dished-out propaganda from interested quarters, or poring over novels and detective blood-curdlers which satisfy his starved imagination by artificially exciting it. Worse still, when denied of natural exercise of his faculties in work and normal human relationships in the home, he resorts to gambling, night-clubs, dance, drink, drugs, narcotics, crime and immorality. His artificial mode of life and work produces innumerable nervous disorders.

Thus, far from increasing and developing his powers, this highly industrialised life tends to curb and stultify the mental and moral life of the average man. As Leonard Woolf says, "Every one tends to go to the same kind of school, and to receive the same kind of education; we all wear the same kind of clothes; we all read the same kind of books; the things

we buy in shops are made by mass production in great factories and are all the same; newspapers with a million or two million or three million circulation give us all the same ready-made views. This standardisation is well worth thinking about. It seems to me a kind of disease of democracy, for it destroys individuality and teaches people to follow one another like sheep instead of choosing for themselves."* Speed, mechanical efficiency, accumulation of wealth, and a multiplicity of goods have certainly been achieved. But at what cost? They appear to have brought with them standardisation of men's thoughts, demoralisation, passivity and enslavement, in short, a deadening of what makes for the development of human personality.

### 4. The end of Capitalism :

A system which brings such disastrous consequences for man cannot long survive.

Not only for this reason does Capitalism seem doomed but also for the fact that at its heart lies an essential contradiction. We have seen how the tendency of Capitalism is to spread its tentacles out like an octopus till it grabs for itself all it can find. In this process, it seeks to do away as much as possible with human labour in order to save expenditure on wages. The result is, no doubt, more profits for the capitalist, but less and less purchasing power in the hands of the consumer. And when the consumer has become too poor to buy the capitalist's products, the system must inevitably collapse. In this, Capitalism has the seeds of destruction within itself.

Besides, exploitation and injustice cannot always go unchallenged. There must come a time when the exploited and the unprivileged will rise in revolt and put an end to the system. Even before this can happen, the exploiter nations seem ready enough to kill each other out of trade jealousy and competition. Being based on violence, its future is insecure. No sooner are the forces of opposition strong enough to organise greater violence against it than it must come down with a crash.

* *The Modern State*: pp. 62 and 63, George Allen and Unwin, 1933.

If large-scale enterprise is to prove a blessing, it would seem that the unbridled greed and selfishness of the capitalist must be abandoned so that wealth is more equally shared by all. This is the solution attempted by Socialism. But before we turn to it we shall consider briefly attempts of Capitalism to advance itself with the aid of the State. This is done in one of two ways:—(1) using the State with a cloak of democracy to cover up exploitation within the country and then stretching out to other countries to exploit weaker peoples, as is done by the Imperialistic Democracies, or (2) using the State against increasing opposition from the people as happens, for instance, under Fascism and Nazism.

CHAPTER II

# THE IMPERIALISTIC DEMOCRACIES, FASCISM, AND NAZISM

## 1. The Imperialistic Democracies :

Naturally enough those who have made their millions by capitalistic enterprise will not easily give up the system which has enabled them to obtain so much wealth. They cling to it as to life. In spite of Karl Marx who held that Communism will arise only when industrialisation has made the furthest advance, highly industrialised countries are the last to renounce Capitalism, and an industrially backward country like Russia was the first to take to Communism. In Russia, where Capitalism had not yet entrenched itself, it was possible to break off from it. But not so in countries like the United States, England, Italy or Germany, where the capitalist being expert in the game will not give in easily, but devises ways and means of using the machinery of the Government to further his own ends and to crush opposition.

### (*A*) *The Democracies :*

In the Democracies, such as the United States and England, Capitalism pretends to allow itself to be controlled by the wishes of the people while actually it is using the State for its own selfish purposes. In these countries, to all appearances, Capitalism is under State control. Thus, for instance, the State there has stepped in to alleviate the condition of the worker, and laws have been enacted restricting his hours of work in mines and factories, and enforcing precautions against danger to his life or limb. Wages are not left to the sweet will of the capitalist. The State interferes in disputes between capital and labour. Child labour is prohibited. Till lately, the common complaint was that under Capitalism there was no plan or direction behind industrial development. Now, industrial commissions appointed by the State sit and map out the course of industrial enterprise for the next few years. The State now definitely bans starting of business for which

there is no need, and encourages by various means production which is in the interests of the nation. Indeed, during the last few years, under the New Deal of President Roosevelt, the United States Government exercised a very salutary effect on the industrial life of the country, which till then appeared to be on the verge of collapse. Today, under the stress of war, many of the essential industries like coal, oil, iron and steel, ship-building, aeroplane and armament manufacture are directly under State control. Further, both in the United States and in England, production is passing more and more from the hands of individuals and is being carried on by paid managers and experts as under Socialism. Thus, services like Bus Transport, and Electricity, which were formerly run by individuals, are now being run by municipalities and corporations. Under the circumstances, it is claimed that Capitalism is gradually being socialised, or controlled by the State in the interests of the nation and not left to the greed of the capitalist.

Further, the State makes inroads on the wealth accumulated by the capitalist. It levies death duties whereby it appropriates a good percentage of the fortune inherited by a person, and taxes incomes. And, from money obtained thus, many public utility services are carried on—like housing, sanitation, health, roads, education, research, recreational facilities for workers, old age pensions, and insurance against accidents, disease and unemployment. It is sought in these various ways to counteract the unequal distribution of wealth under Capitalism by taking money from the capitalist and using it for the people.

It is thought that in this manner it is possible with State interference gradually to get rid of the evils of Capitalism, and to make available for all the blessings of increased wealth obtained through large-scale enterprise, especially since in democratic countries like England and America, the people can make use of the machinery of Government to curb the greed of the capitalist, and make him willy nilly contribute to the welfare of the people.

This sounds well enough in theory, but actually the capitalist is all too powerful for the people. He submits to the

State in a few things, true enough, but only to make all the greater use of it for his own purposes, as we shall presently see. The much talked of democracy in these countries he uses as a smoke screen for carrying on his exploitation all the more. Here is Bernard Shaw's description of British democracy, in his Preface to the "Apple Cart":—"I am going to ask you to begin our study of Democracy by considering it first as a big balloon, filled with gas or hot air, and sent up so that you shall be kept looking up at the sky whilst other people are picking your pockets. When the balloon comes down to earth every five years or so, you are invited to get into the basket if you can throw out one of the people who are sitting tightly in it; but as you can afford neither the time nor the money, and there are forty millions of you and hardly room for six hundred in the basket, the balloon goes up again with much the same lot in it and leaves you where you were before. I think you, will admit that the balloon as an image of Democracy corresponds to the parliamentary facts." The outer trappings—the vote and parliamentary representation—are those of democracy, but the controlling power is that of the capitalist. Indeed, through his money the capitalist controls even the vote, so that many of the so-called representatives of the people in Parliament are his own creation and represent only him.

Under the circumstances, from behind the screen of democracy, the capitalist pulls the strings, and the State dances accordingly. He persuades it to build up a strong army, navy and air-force, as we have already pointed out. This is primarily to protect his trade and to make his voice heard by the nations. He gets the State to shape its monetary policy to suit his requirements by means of inflation or deflation, or by manipulating exchange. His voice determines peace treaties, pacts and trade agreements. He obtains from the Government subsidies, which are free grants to him generously made from public revenue. He gets the State to raise tariffs to protect his manufactures against foreign competition, and at times even proclaims embargoes or boycott of trade with a country with which he is in conflict. He sets the State police and weapons of repression against all those who would oppose him

and forces the State to declare war when another Government refuses to concede his demands.

The policy pursued by the British Government in relation to the Fascist powers during the last ten years is a telling illustration of how completely the Government of that country is in the hands of a few rich. Britain at first wooed Germany, Japan and Italy, and even an Anglo-German fellowship was established towards the close of 1935 after Hitler had come to power,* as the British monied classes were afraid of the phenomenal rise to power of Russian Communism, and hoped that if the Fascist states,which were blatantly anti-Communistic, were permitted to become strong, they would successfully prevent Communism from spreading West and overrunning the rest of the world. But when they found that Germany and Japan were themselves becoming a threat to their empire, they changed their attitude of friendliness and declared war against these nations. If Britain had acted earlier, the enormous cost now being paid by her in terms of men or material might have been averted or at least been considerably reduced. But what does this matter to the capitalist, so long as his own position of advantage is not endangered by the spread of Communism ? So, in spite of the fact that the British people were ready in 1935† to use force to prevent military aggression, their Government was not permitted by the monied classes to take action against the Fascist States till it became obvious to the capitalist in 1939 that such a policy of appeasement was ruinous to his own position and the empire.

Against this tremendous power of the capitalist the will of the voter is as a voice of one crying in the wilderness. The capitalist yields to it only when he finds that ultimately it is in his own interests to do so. But otherwise he does not hesitate to flout it, go his own way and invent spurious reasons to dupe the public into thinking he is acting for their welfare. The six hundred talk and discuss loudly, diverting the attention of the people, while from behind the scenes the capitalist does silently his work of pick-pocketing.

* Gracchus: *Your M. P.*, 1944, p. 42f.

† Ibid p. 19f.

How true all this is only we who are the subjects of British "democratic" rule and at the same time the victims of British exploitation can tell. In theory, the British people are responsible for the Government of India. But actually the forty million people of Britain know as little about the Government of India, and have as little to do with it, as the man in the moon. And not only they, but even the six hundred who are members of Parliament. The British Government carefully censors all news that goes from India, and even members of Parliament can know only what little trickles through from the Secretary of State for India, and then only in the garbled form in which he considers it fit to give it to them. If even what members of Parliament can know about India is thus doled out to them by the British Government, in what sense indeed can they and the British people be said to be responsible for the Government of India? Is not democracy then even in this much advertised land of democracy only an outward show? It sounds well to say that the Government of India is responsible to the British people, but actually in practice, the Government of India when stripped of all camouflage is responsible only to the British capitalist. Such of the British public as may take an intelligent interest in India may cry themselves hoarse in favour of immediate establishment of a national Government in India, but their voice will never be heard so long as the British capitalist will not have it so. Plausible reasons will always be manufactured to show how in Indian interests it would be folly to give in to the wishes of a few unrepresentative but vocal power-seeking politicians in India! And the British capitalist will use the British Government to continue to hold India, no matter what the British public think.

(*B*) *Imperialism:*

Thus, not content with exploiting his own Government, the capitalist controls also the Governments of weaker peoples under the guise of trusteeship or of nobly carrying on their Governments for them till they are fit to look after their own affairs. Covering up greed, violence and underhand dealing with such fine talk, he uses their Governments to safeguard

and advance his own interests at their expense. Let us illustrate this with reference to our country.

(1) To discourage import of non-British goods into India, a higher duty is levied by the Indian Government on non-British imports, as though it mattered the slightest to the Indian consumer whether his imports came from Britain or from anywhere else. The lower duty on British manufactures is as good as a bounty from Indian revenues paid to the British manufacturer that he may better compete with the non-British manufacturer.

(2) To escape import duty, to find profitable investment for surplus capital, and to profit by cheap labour in India, British capitalists have of late begun to dump on India factories, which, owing to their vast financial resources, are able to wage a merciless rate war against Indian owned companies. They exploit the swadeshi spirit by adding "(India) Ltd." to their names or by stamping the words "Made in India" on their products. And conveniently for them, the Indian Government does not care to question whether the companies are Indian owned, and confers on them the same protection as it does to Indian owned enterprises. Not only does the Government thus cherish foreign interests which are threatening the establishment and growth of Indian industry, but it has also gone out of its way to provide for "Commercial safeguards" for their protection in our very Constitution. Such generosity to foreign companies is unknown in any other part of the world.

Nor can it be argued that as these concerns employ Indian labour and Indian raw materials, they after all benefit the country. For compared with the wages they pay to Indian labour they send away huge profits out of the country. Thus during the early years after the first world War, the profits of the jute mills ranged from six to eight times their total wages bill. "For every £ 12 that they paid in wages to their Indian workers, they remitted £ 100 in profits to their shareholders in Scotland." * And, what is worse, through such blood-sucking, the British capitalist's love for India grows, and he will not let go his grip over the Government at any cost now or for an indefinite future if he can help it.

* H. N. Brailsford: *Prosperity or Peace*, p. 221.

(3) In the agricultural colleges and research institutes run on Government funds, research is carried on primarily to aid the industrialist, although he can well afford to maintain his own research departments, while the problems of the village producer, who has crying need to improve his methods and technique of production, go by default. What is worse, the schemes suggested for research, though profitable to the industrialist, may be altogether injurious to the villager. But this of course is of little consequence, so long as it profits the industrialist. Thus, for instance, research is carried on in Indian agricultural colleges in regard to cultivation of long-staple cotton, if the mills want this done, although so far as the village producer goes such cultivation may be uneconomic, as, though it may bring him a little more income, weight for weight, than short-staple cotton, it takes a longer time to ripen, and its yield per acre is less. Because of its having to remain longer in the field, not only does it involve a longer period of labour, but is not suited to the Indian climate as the longer it remains in the field the greater the risk of its being damaged by untimely rains, or by insect pests. Besides, it leaves him at the mercy of the international market about whose functioning he knows nothing and over which he has no control. Similarly, the Government has been more interested in bringing about improvements in commercial crops than in food crops, with the result that while the percentage of acreage under improved variety of seed under commercial crops in which the capitalist is interested, like cotton, jute and sugar-cane, was 25, 62·5 and 71·1, respectively, the corresponding figures for rice, millets and gram which constitute almost entirely the diet of the people in vast areas of the country were only 5·1, 0·5 and 0·4, respectively. *

(4) The Government of India manipulates exchange in order to suit the interests of the British capitalist. It is notorious how the Government in spite of unanimous protests from Indian businessmen keeps the value of the rupee raised in terms of the pound sterling. Formerly the rupee was equal to 16 d. It has since been raised to 18 d. The result is the

* Sir Manilal B. Nanavati and J. J. Anjaria : *The Indian Rural Problem*, 1944, p. 38.

Britisher can sell his goods more easily in India under the new rate. Let us say the British manufacturer can sell a shirt in India only if he got 18 d. for it. According to the new rate of exchange, it means that the Indian buyer will have to pay only one rupee if he wants to buy it, whereas according to the old rate he would have had to pay Rs. 1-2-0 for the same shirt. This means that British goods can sell in the Indian market, owing to the new rate of exchange, cheaper by two annas in every rupee, which of course is quite an appreciable help to the British capitalist against the Indian manufacturer. How easily the British producer manages to keep Indian trade in his hands merely by this one stroke of the pen in his favour by the Government of India !

(5) Then again, the police and the military who are paid out of public revenue are used for the protection of the capitalist, and so-called law and order are maintained even if it means complete suppression of the people, so that the investments of the British capitalist may be secure, and he may obtain his dividends whatever happens in the country.

(6) In order that there may be no competition against British industrialists from Indian manufacturers, India is prevented from industrialising itself. The Indian labourer and middle class are left untrained and unfit for scientific technical work, because if they were highly educated, drilled and skilled, like for instance their German colleagues, there will be little chance for the British manufacturer maintaining his hold on the Indian market. On the other hand, the purely literary education given them aims only at turning out clerks who will meekly carry out the Government's orders and not have enough initiative and enterprise to challenge British industrial supremacy. Further, machinery imported from abroad is taxed in order to discourage industrialisation. Of course, the British business magnate cannot entirely stop industrial development in India, as he himself requires for his trade motor roads, railways, harbours, etc., and this implies workshops and a few industrial enterprises, which he permits. Iron and Steel were allowed during the first world War when it became a necessity in the interests of the rulers. Light

industries worked chiefly by British companies and a few others have come into existence in view of cheap labour available in India; and raw materials are worked up through the first stages prior to export. Nevertheless, in the main, British policy has been definitely opposed to the industrialisation of India. Even the exigencies of the present War are not sufficient to make the British capitalist relax his hold in regard to the industrialisation of the country, and the Government of India has accordingly consistently refused to listen to the clamours of the people of India for industrial development. The proposals made by Indian industrialists in this connection have been turned down, and obstacles have been placed in the way of those who were prepared to start industries on their own initiative. Lately the Government went to the extent of tearing up rails and dispatching them, as well as waggons and locomotives, to theatres of War, but refused to have them manufactured in the country, though they were badly needed here, and though plans for their manufacture had already been made and approved. The reason given for abandoning their manufacture at the last moment was that it was more desirable to import them from abroad. Similarly in regard to the automobile industry. The Government was hard put to it to importing trucks and lorries that were required in large numbers. It would rather that shiploads of these were sunk in the ocean on their way here than that India should be allowed to manufacture them and thus in later years cease to be a market for the British automobile industry. The contrast between the treatment accorded in this respect to India and that accorded to Australia is striking. Australia started in a worse position than India in regard to steel production, but increased it rapidly and within two years was able to manufacture aircraft, wireless and other articles through Government effort aided by British, American and other industrialists. If it was possible to export plant and spare experts for Australia in spite of the War, it was possible to do the same for India also. Only the will was lacking. The policy of the British Government is to keep India an agricultural country so that there may be a flow of cheap raw materials to British factories, and cheap food supplies for

British workers. The cheap food is essential if the labourer in Britain is to work for low wages.

(7) Moreover, Indian railway rates are so arranged as to encourage export of raw materials to sea-ports and thence abroad, and import of finished goods from sea-ports to the interior. How obliging the Indian railways are made to be to the British capitalist that under orders from the Government of India they lower their feight rates to allow manufactured goods to come in from abroad, and conversely, raise inland rates to discourage local manufacture and trade. Similarly, they lower their rates on raw materials booked to sea-ports, in order to facilitate the flow of raw materials from the interior abroad, so that the British capitalist may obtain his supply as cheap as possible. Convenient indeed to have an empire where little facilities such as these, which mean so much, can be nicely arranged! For, be it noted, it amounts to nothing less than India discriminating against itself in favour of Britain. Such self-denying altruism is generally not found between nations, certainly not when they are equals.

(8) Not content with these and other such arrangements which are made to help the British industrialist, everything is done to keep the people disunited so as to prevent them from rising effectively in opposition against such exploitation. Social, racial and religious divisions are fostered to keep them apart on the principle of 'divide and rule'. The policy has met with such good success that at no time in India's history has the country been so split up into conflicting interests, each flying at the throat of the other, as it is today, and looking to the British to maintain the scales evenly between them. Unity is said to be one of the benefits we have received from British rule. Yes, if by it we mean the mechanical unity of administration; but nothing but growing disunity if we take into consideration the various elements that go to compose the nation. Hence it is that Gandhiji has declared lately that Hindu Muslim unity, or for the matter of that, any other unity, cannot be achieved as long as the British remain with us. It is too much in the interests of the foreign rulers to break up the country into warring elements for anything other than disunity to result from their domination.

And so far as the welfare of the people goes in this happy democracy, according to the Report in 1933 of Major General Sir John Megaw, Director of the Indian Medical Service, only 39% of the population of India are properly nourished, 160 million are poorly nourished, at least 80 million are perpetually hungry, 50 to 100 million people suffer from malaria, a fever which is quite capable of being stamped out, and disease is steadily spreading throughout the land and increasing rapidly. The bulk of the people are steeped in ignorance and superstition in spite of 150 years of British rule, only 14·6 per cent of the population above the age of five being literate. What after all does the British capitalist care about the health or education of the people? So these receive scanty attention from the Government of India, while the army which is the mainstay of the British business magnate is the largest item of expenditure from the revenues of India. For the army is required to maintain the hold of the British in India and to ward off any likely rivals who may want a share in the loot from this most precious part of the British empire.

Such is the Indian "democracy" to protect which Indians are asked to give freely of their men and material. The whole is so cleverly contrived that taxation, research, education, agriculture, monetary policy, army, police, industries, railways and political administration in India are one and all controlled by British interests. Is it surprising if those Indians who have seen through the game rebel and ask the British to quit India bag and baggage? Is it wrong for a man to want to drive out the thief from his own house? Yet, such as want to do this and to establish a government which will be run in the interests of the nation, which is what one expects of a real democracy, are clapped in jails, so that the way may be clear for autocratic rule in the interests of the British capitalist. All opposition is suppressed with a firm hand by press restrictions and ordinances which deprive the people of the right of free speech, assembly or discussion, and an unnatural quiet, which has been rightly likened to the peace of the graveyard, overshadows the land.

(C) *The Outward Show of Democracy:*

All this, we shall be told, is very one-sided, for after all the Government of India is run practically by Indians them-

selves. The majority of the members of the Viceroy's Executive Council, the ministers of the Provinces, at least half of the members of the Indian Civil Service, and practically all the members of the provincial services are Indians. That being so, how can it be said that the Government of India exists merely to exploit India in the interests of the British capitalist?

In reply, we may briefly mention that, in the first place, the Viceroy and the Governors have overriding powers over their cabinets, so that when British interests are at stake they can always step in to safeguard them.

In the second place, important portfolios like Defence, Finance and Transport are under the Central Government which is responsible only to the Secretary of State for India and not to the people. As Indians have no voice in these matters, responsible Indian ministers can do very little in the Provinces in the spheres allotted to them, as at every turn the policy of the Central Government in regard to these vital subjects is involved, and acts as a brake and a stumbling block, and effectively prevents anything being done that may in effect be contrary to British interests.

A telling illustration of this has been provided of late by the Bengal Famine, where the province, in spite of having "responsible" Government, was quite helpless to deal with the situation. The famine was brought about by cessation of imports from Burma, military purchases, inflation or high prices resulting from the British Government paying for purchases from India with Sterling Securities against which an enormous amount of rupee notes were issued, export of food grains, food procurement policy whereby food was forcibly taken away from the villages and hoarded in Culcutta for the use of the military and industrial labour, and reservation of shipping, boat and railway transport for military purposes. If the provincial Government had been watchful it could have mitigated the situation to some extent. But it could not possibly have averted it except with the aid of the British Government in England and the Central Government in India, both of which were responsible for the above causes.

In the third place, the Indians who serve the Government, whether they be non-officials nominated by the Government or

officials directly in its employ, are, naturally enough, the last persons to go against its wishes, for if they do, they will accomplish nothing beyond losing their jobs. So they prefer to remain yes-men meekly carrying out its orders. They constitute the screen—the outward appearance of Indian rule—behind which the British capitalist pulls the strings, if anything the harder.

Not only in India, but in all industrial countries, the capitalist thus buys up the middle class and the more privileged from among the working class so that they may not hinder him in his work of plunder and exploitation. This he does by appointing them to good administrative jobs on handsome salaries. They thenceforward join hands with the capitalist and oppose those who wish to wage war against him. This is what has happened, for instance, to the more important British Labour leaders in England, who being once installed in places of responsibility, became even stauncher supporters of Tory policy than the Conservatives themselves. To give the appearance of being a popular government and to silence opposition, such people are taken into the Government, but the policy followed is what suits the capitalist.

That, after all, this loud-mouthed talk of getting rid of the evils of Capitalism through State interference, or of gradually parting with imperial power to the people, is only a pretence and has no real substance in it, is seen from the fact that so far as the exploited go, whether in industrialised countries or in subject nations, their condition today remains practically unchanged, and if anything worse, as we shall presently see. The effect on such should after all be the acid test of whether there has been any real improvement or reform achieved through the help of the government. Even where, as in Municipal Bus Transport, the proprietorship has gone from the hands of individuals to Municipalities who then engage managers and experts for running them, the fact that the specialists are highly paid while the workers are paid the minimum, goes to show in whose interests these services are run—certainly not in the interests of the labourer. The working classes everywhere in capitalistic countries are still exploited and underpaid. Their condition will have been worse

but for Trade Unions and working class organisations which have done much to force the capitalist to yield to some of their more insistent demands. But, otherwise, to the working class are now being added the midde class who are losing their independence and becoming hirelings of the capitalist, subject like the working class to low remuneration, bad food and housing. Thus according to the Census of 1931, as much as 88·4 per cent of the population of Britain were in that year wage-workers, and only 5·5 per cent owners of the means of production employing wage-workers, leaving only 6 per cent as workers on their own account* The formation of greater and greater capitalistic monopolies along with more and more intense nationalisation and consequent retrenchment has meant a large number of people being turned out of their jobs to face ruin and starvation, or degraded into living on doles. Even with State control of industry this problem shows no signs of nearing a solution; on the other hand it is growing from bad to worse, even in prosperous countries like the United States of America, where we are told that in 1933 there were over 14 million people unemployed, i. e., over one-tenth of the population. How much worse in countries like India where under imperialist domination more and more people are sinking into poverty; so that it looks as though before long there may be no middle class left in India, the present middle class merging in the working population, and the peasant population gradually dying of famine and disease as is happening before our very eyes today in Bengal and some other parts of India. The imperialist cares little so long as his one purpose of holding his own against rival marauders is served.

The Imperialistic Democracies, then, far from solving the problem and alleviating the condition of the people, seem thus to be only deepening and intensifying the crisis. That the United States and Britain, the two most powerful democracies of the world, are only seeking to strengthen and extend their own imperial stranglehold on colonial countries is gradually becoming apparent from statements made by Churchill and his crew that the British will hold what they have, that what they have is their own domestic concern and will be used by

* John Strachey : *What are we to do?* p. 15.

them as bases for maintaining "world-peace," that the remaining "backward" countries will be divided up between themselves and Russia in the interests of industrial development, and that they will cripple and crush their rivals in such a way that the order they set up can never again be challenged or upset. All this of course in the name of upholding freedom, democracy, civilisation, and world-peace! The more the world is to pass into the hands of imperialist exploiters, the louder and finer the sentiments expressed. Behind the velvet gloves of idealism are the sharp claws of the ravenous wolf. Once more the sweet voice is that of democracy while the hidden hand is that of the pickpocket preparing for a larger and more permanent loot.

To help obtain this empire for the capitalist, the wealth earned by the nation through years of hard toil is poured out like water, and the masses are forced to fight and risk their lives whether they wish to or not. And so far as subject nations like ourselves go, our men and material are taken away from us without even the pretence of obtaining our consent. If this be freedom and democracy, what, we ask, are slavery and tyranny?

When all this is taken into account, it would seem that Capitalism of the old individualist type was far better than the Capitalism of today, which under the garb of being controlled by democratic states is playing havoc with the wealth and welfare of nations. It has now become so formidable that it uses national governments as but departments of itself, and employs all the resources of the State for consolidating and advancing itself. The so-called democracy of the imperialist countries is then but a veiled rule by capitalist dictators—a rule established and maintained by deceit and violence, where private gain is everything and public good next to nothing.

## 2. Fascism:

At a certain stage in its development, Capitalism decides o throw off its mask of democracy and come out into the open. In "democratic" countries, as we have pointed out, it put on the appearance of being controlled by the wishes

of the people. But we have seen that this was only a make-believe, and that actually even in the so-called democracies, the State was controlled by the capitalist in his own interests, from the pursuit of which nothing could deter him. Under Fascism the wishes of the people count for nothing, the State is all in all. Thus the pretence of democracy is removed, and a dictatorship is established which openly and unashamedly suppresses the people. Such establishment of a dictatorship by capitalistic interests arises wherever the capitalist becomes afraid of the opposition that is growing up against him, and he uses the State to crush it.

As monopolist Capitalism becomes powerful with its huge trusts and combines, it becomes more and more an intolerable burden not only on the exploited workers but also on the intelligentsia, small businessmen and shopkeepers, partly because all these are adversely affected by its expansion and tend to lose their independence and means of livelihood, and partly also because under the economic nationalism pursued by the State there is increased taxation, subsidies and tariffs, all of which become more than they can bear. The opposition to Capitalism and to the capitalist-controlled State, therefore, grows and develops till it becomes a formidable power. All the discontented elements in the nation tend to drift into Socialism. They refuse to be deceived any more by sweet words and fine sentiments, and organise themselves to fight for their rights.

Under the circumstances, the capitalist looks for a method whereby he can use the people against themselves. The Government provides him the way out. He supports to power in the Government such of the people as will crush the opposition. As in the democracies, some of the able members of the middle class and workers are bought off with State offices under the leadership of a man of the people. This gives the semblance of a people's Government, and with its aid a regular war is waged against revolutionary working class organisations in the name of law and order, and all opposition on the part of the people is ruthlessly suppressed.

(*A*) *Historical :*

Fascism rose in Italy under Mussolini (1883-1945), son of a blacksmith. After the first world War when with demobili-

sation there was much misery and unemployment in Italy, Musssolini with his great lust for power organised ex-soldiers and disgruntled lower middle class men into fighting-groups (Fasci di combattimenti). These being of the non-propertied classes were opposed in theory to the capitalist class, and raised many anti-capitalist slogans in common with the socialists. They were therefore joined in large numbers by unemployed middle class people, peasants and others who had grievances against the propertied classes. At the same time Mussolini was definitely opposed to the socialists. Though originally a socialist himself, he was expelled from the socialist party when he turned fanatically nationalist and advocated Italian intervention in the first world War. Being thus hostile to the socialists, he used his mass organisation against that of the working class who under well-organised trade unions were on the verge of revolution to set up a socialist republic. The capitalists who watched the growing power of the working class with uneasiness, naturally welcomed Mussolini's movement, financed it and made use of it as a tool whereby to destroy the power of labour and Socialism. Mussolini thus received the support of the rich as well as the poor. With the appeal to the poor the party grew vastly in numbers till it became a mass movement, and with the help of the rich Mussolini realised his ambition for power, seized the reins of Government and used it, as desired by his sponsors, to establish a reign of terror against the socialistic working class and against all those who opposed him.

Fascism has no new philosophy or economic plan for the future. For the economic problems of the day it has no new solutions to suggest. It accepts the present capitalistic order unquestioningly ; only it adds to it a fiery nationalism. Thus Mussolini himself says of the Fascists, " Not being tied down to any fixed principles, they proceed unceasingly towards one goal, the future well-being of the Italian people." This goal, of course, is not peculiar to the Fascists. It is the slogan of every party which seeks power. Nevertheless, with the Fascists, it was not a mere party-cry to capture votes. It was a genuine passion. It looked back to the past, and coveted for the country the glory of the old Roman empire. It therefore took for itself the

old Roman symbol (a bundle of rods, fasces they were called, with an axe at the centre) which used to be carried before magistrates and emperors. It is said that the rods symbolised punishment by beating and the axe death by execution for those who plotted against the state. It adopted for its salute the old Roman salutation of a raised and outstretched arm. All this looking back to imperial Rome for inspiration was just what the capitalists wanted if their desire for colonies and for establishing an empire was to be fulfilled. Mussolini was therefore allowed to seize power and become the dictator of all Italy.

(B) *Characteristics of Fascism:*

(1) *Totalitarianism:*—The dictator and his party become all in all, and no chance is given for any criticism of them or for opposition to them. Such a state is said to be totalitarian, for the dictator and his party rule totally, leaving in the Government no trace whatsoever of parties opposed to them. All such parties are banned and declared unlawful. Their leaders are imprisoned, exiled, murdered or executed. The public services are given only to such as swear allegiance to the dictator, and if any official shows the slightest trace of sympathy for the opposition he is dismissed and dealt with severely. To detect defection or disloyalty there is let loose on the country a large army of spies and secret police. The administration is by this means purged of all discordant elements, and operates completely according to the wishes of the dictator. The people are too terrified to protest, and are forced to submit tamely like dumb-driven cattle.

(2) *Suppression of liberties:*—The freedom to speak, meet, discuss, organise, and express opinions through the press is removed, and autocratic rule set up. The people may have freedom and democracy when Capitalism is not in danger, but no sooner Capitalism is threatened, than these are completely suppressed, and terrorism and repression take their place.

All this is justified on the theory that the nineteenth century idea of democracy by vote as rule by the people is

outworn foolishness; that, on the other hand, the State as representing the nation ought to have complete power over the individual, and that the individual develops his personality and fulfils himself only as he loses himself in the State. The State is god and on its altar individual rights and freedom ought to be sacrificed.

(3) *Nationalism*:—As in the case of the democracies, resort is had to idealism, but this time not in the name of freedom which is openly suppressed, but in the name of patriotism. A rabid nationalism is whipped up amongst the people, glorifying the country, instilling into the young pride in its history and culture, drilling them into worship of the State and the dictator.

Exploiting the patriotism thus stirred up, an autarchy or economic nationalism is set up, whereby the Government pursues a policy of aiding the capitalist by means of loans, sudsidies and tariffs. This results in great hardship for the people as it means heavy taxation and high prices. But that of course is of little concern to the capitalist.

(4) *War*:—What is worse, economic nationalism under Capitalism inevitably leads to economic warfare culminating in international strife. To incite the people to fight, the evils which the nation is suffering from owing to lack of space for expansion are exaggerated. The real aim is of course to expand business and capture new territories for raw material supplies, markets, spheres of investment, and cheap labour, as what was achieved by Italy in these respects as the result of the 1914-1918 war was disappointing. But who will be ready to give his life and his wealth to fight for these purposes which benefit primarily the capitalist? So it is made out that territorial expansion is a vital need of the nation which must otherwise perish for lack of space and bread.

Thus Mussolini declares, " A country which has a population equal to that of France, confined in an area half the size of the latter, with colonial possessions one-twentieth the size of the French and one-hundredth that of the British, must forcibly find an outlet for her surplus inhabitants. But where and how? As it is, Italian resources hardly fulfil the

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requirements of her forty millions today, but the problem will become exceedingly urgent in the course of the next twenty years, when her population will have risen to fifty millions or more. At that moment Italy will find herself on the verge of servitude, certainly economic, and perhaps political."*

In this way an appeal is made to a sense of injustice, of inequality and of national right. If a whole nation believes that unless it expands territorially, it must starve or be deprived of its fair share of wealth, it can be persuaded to fight unto death—not for money or profit, but for justice, for the most fundamental of all human rights, the right to life. Thus national passion is roused, fanned into a flame till it becomes a mighty fire capable of consuming anything that comes in its way.

The deluded people go to war, give their all, including their lives, and if they are victorious the capitalist obtains his colonies. Or at any rate the people who, till now were disgruntled and discontented with the capitalist and the Government, forget their miserable condition at home, as their whole attention is now directed against the foreign power. So wars are favourite weapons under Fascism. They either bring the capitalist fresh territories for exploitation, or they turn away from him the opposition of the people and keep them employed. Wars are therefore idolised. It is said that they make for nobility of character, courage, heroism, discipline, perseverance, patriotism, unselfishness and such like.

Fascist powers cannot of course be blamed altogether for their too great propensity to war, so long as the colonial countries of the world have been seized by the industrialised nations. It is because of the selfishness of the Haves that the Have-nots go to war to see what they can grab for themselves. So if the Fascist countries plunge the world into war, it is the so-called democratic countries that are really to blame.

Nevertheless, it must be pointed out that the desire for territorial expansion is in itself unjustifiable. If every nation—say, e. g., India and China which are also Have-not states and have much greater need for expansion, wanted to expand, where is the space in the world for them? Besides, all expansion

* Quoted by Norman Angell in *The Great Illusion-Now*, pp. 71 and 72.

means impinging on the rights of other nations. Therefore the Fascist plea for territorial expansion, though understandable, is not morally defensible. But who bothers about morals in matters relating to politics and economics? Certainly not the capitalist who, for the sake of territorial expansion, plunges the whole nation from time to time into war under the most lofty idealism.

Fundamentally, then, there is not much to choose between the state-controlled Capitalism of Britain and America, and the Fascism of Italy. For in both, the State is ultimately very much under the control of the capitalist. The only difference is that to all appearances the individual's liberties and the outward form of democracy are preserved in Britain and America, while these are openly discarded in Fascism.

### 3. Nazism:

(*A*) *Historical:*

A movement similar to Fascism in Italy occurred in Germany under Adolf Hitler (1889-1945). He worked as a bricklayer for some time. Like Mussolini, Hitler was opposed to Socialism. After the first world War, in Germany the socialists who called themselves Social Democrats, and corresponded to the Labour Party of England, were in power. Being in office, their Socialism was of the moderate type unlike that of the working class which was of the the extreme form called Communism. Hitler being opposed to Socialism in any form was opposed both to the Social Democrats and to the Communists.

He gathered round him the middle class, who had lost their money through the inflation of 1923-24, and also some ex-Army officers who were unemployed. He formed with them a new party called the National Socialists. It was not socialist at all, but it was called so in order to enlist for itself the sympathy of those who were inclined towards Socialism, The word Nazi is derived from *Na* in National and *Zi* from the second two letters in Sozialist, the German for Socialist. Like the Fascists, the Nazis, as the National Socialists were called for short, being opposed to the Socialists, received support from the capitalist class. Being dispossessed middle class people

they criticised the capitalists, and so won the support also of some who were opposed to the capitalists. Thus the party grew in numbers till it became a mass movement—more huge than the Fascist movement in Italy, which did not succeed in winning over the people to the same extent. It consisted of a strange mixture of doctrines—capitalistic and anti-capitalistic —and was held together primarily by the personality of the founder, Hitler.

Since all that the capitalists want is that their own private enterprise should thrive and that Socialism should be suppressed at all costs, Hitler who was known to be opposed to Socialism was allowed to seize power and proclaim himself dictator. He obtained the support of a land-owning clique and a group of virtually bankrupt steel industrialists who hoped for financial aid from a Hitler Government. Though these land-owners and industrialists were mostly non-Nazis, they wanted to make use of Hitler merely as a tool. And so they did. For instance, the original basis of the Nazi party lay in the middle class which the Nazis promised to save from the ruin threatening it from the growth of big business. But, actually, when the party came into power, it adopted the policy of closing down small enterprises on the ground that they were superfluous; its owners were then turned into factory workers. Moreover, the steel industrialists, with the help of Government funds, reorganised their companies, and urged Hitler to purge his party of any who had socialist leanings. The result was the "Blood Bath" of June 30, 1934, when socialist leaders and some of their followers, amounting, it is said, to between 300 and 1,000 persons, were suddenly arrested and executed, amongst them being men to whom Hitler owed most of his success. Having thus got leading socialists out of the way the industrialists and militarists induced Hitler to direct his energies to a policy of rapid rearmament and imperialist expansion. As the Report issued to the United States Military Sub-Committee on November 12, 1944, says, "The individual monopolists of Germany have worked long and ardently for Pan-Germanism; they willingly joined partnership with Hitler to achieve their ends......Punishment of the 10,000 leading imperialist minded German industrialists will

be more effective than punishment of a million Nazi underlings who carried out the orders of the conspirators ".* Like Italy, only even more thoroughly, all opposition was completely crushed, and a reign of terror instituted wherein spies stalked the land to put an end to the slightest trace of opposition to the dictator and his party. A fierce attack was made on all liberal, pacifist and socialist elements, especially on the workers. So completely did the capitalist interests in Germany use Hitler for their own ends.

(*B*) *Characteristics of Nazism :*

(*1*) *Fascism :* It is apparent that in all these respects Nazism is but a parallel movement in Germany to Fascism in Italy. In essence, therefore, it is characterised by the same features as we pointed out under Fascism, viz., Totalitarianism, Suppression of liberties, Nationalism and War. It is unnecessary for us therefore to repeat here as characteristics of Nazism what we mentioned there. The only matter in which Nazism shows any difference from Fascism is in regard to its Nationalism which assumes an extremely narrow racial form.

(2) *Anti-Jewism :*— The natianalism of the Nazis is based on race. They idolise the German Aryan race as superior to every other in its capacity for thought and organisation. They believe that because of this, it is destined to rule over others, and must be kept pure and unadulterated to fulfil its mission. They therefore use for their emblem the Swastika, which is an old Aryan symbol. And filled with faith in their own superiority and contempt for other races, they hope to dominate the world. This, of course, suits the German capitalist who is looking for territories for expansion.

Within the country, the non-Aryans most in evidence were the Jews, and against them the Nazis directed all their racial pride and hatred. Hitler held that the Jews were deliberately aiming at spoiling the purity of the Aryan race by cross-breeding, so as to bring about their physical and spiritual decline, and thus secure from the Aryans the domination of the world. On the west was France, a stronghold of the Jews completely under the control of Jewish financiers,

* Reuter : *Bombay Chronicle*, November 15, 1944.

and on the east Russia which sought under the guise of a new philosophy invented by a Jew, Karl Marx, to secure world-domination for the Jews. The only way to save Germany and the Aryan world from the Jews was to destroy France and to crush Russia. This, Hitler considered, was his sacred mission.

The truth is that the Jews held an important position in Germany, and owned and controlled much of the business, big and small, and also possessed land. What better target for directing racial fanaticism against than the Jews so that the poor and hungry may be fed, and the capitalist may be rid of a formidable rival? The Nazis, as we have already seen, had in their following an army of unemployed and dispossessed people who needed a means of livelihood. They obtained under cover of love for the fatherland an excuse for plunder and loot. They subjected the Jews to inhuman treatment, and sought to extirpate them by every means possible—boycott, exile, beatings and murder. Behind the anti-Jew movement of the Nazis was thus the privation and hunger of the dispossessed middle classes. It was above all a scramble for jobs and bread.

(3) *Revolt against the Treaty of Versailles*:—Hitler's anti-Jew crusade has received world-wide publicity. But what drew vast multitudes to him from almost every rank of the nation was his fanatic nationalism. The Nazi concept of Justice was defined in the maxim 'Right is that which is useful to the nation.' The Germans had been humiliated to the dust by the Treaty of Versailles, and only bided their time for a leader who would help them to vindicate their national honour. Their territory had been cut up and parcelled out among various small states. They were cramped, hampered and hindered on every side. Getting back old territory, and if possible pushing forward into new, was of course just what the capitalist wanted.

(4) *Anti-Sovietism*:—But if Germany was to have new territory it could be only at the expense of the Soviet Union which lay stretched out for miles from Europe in the west to the Pacific Ocean in the east. So Germany cast hungry eyes on Soviet territory. It was again a case of the Have-

nots wanting a share in the booty of the Haves. In addition, of course, was the capitalist's desire to crush Soviet Communism. In this Hitler could well pose as the champion of Europe against Soviet Russia, and could have rallied round him the sympathy not only of the powerful capitalist class of his own country, but also of Italy, and even of the rest of Europe but for their fear of what this rising leader may do against their own interests.

In essence, then, but for local circumstances which have given Nazism one or two characteristics of its own, it has all the elements of Fascism. It is fundamentally a frantic attempt by the capitalist class to protect itself against the working class which is on the verge of a socialist revolution.

Whether, then, under state-controlled Capitalism in the Imperialistic Democracies, or under Fascism or Nazism, the people in the end are nothing, and the capitalist is everything, and the State in all three cases is used by the capitalist for his own ends. As against this, although it is true that in these countries, the State is ever more increasingly interfering in the industrial life of the country, much to the annoyance of the capitalist, still the aim of these states is always to support and encourage Capitalism as far as possible consistent with the requirements of the War and the nation. Their purpose is to reform and strengthen Capitalism by removing some of its evils, so that while the capitalistic basis remains untouched, the economic system works more smoothly and efficiently. They do not intend thus by any means to displace Capitalism by a more equitable economic order. Even where the State takes over the management of some industries, as happens in all the three types of Government, it is far from being a case of moving towards Socialism, as is sometimes claimed. For the worker under such "socialised capitalism" or "national socialism" is still exploited and paid as little as possible. It would appear, therefore, that if the masses are to receive a fair wage and fair treatment, Capitalism in every form must go. This is what is attempted under Socialism to a consideration of which we may now turn.

## CHAPTER III

## SOCIALISM

From our study of Capitalism it is clear that the whole trouble with it is that under it the profits of large-scale production are appropriated mostly by the owners of the enterprise. The machines turn out enormous wealth, but very little reaches the worker. Similarly much of the produce of the land goes to the landlord. This will be so, so long as land and machines are owned by the capitalist. Owning them, he naturally feels that he has every right to the profits which they make possible. A small wealthy minority who do not do any work live thus on rents and profits, while the vast majority who work by the sweat of their brow live on their small earnings. If we want this changed, the obvious solution is to take possession of the land and machines, get rid of the capitalist, and distribute the wealth produced by them, more or less evenly among those who have helped to produce it. But who is to possess the land and machines? Not an individual, for then we shall have Capitalism all over again. They will have to be jointly owned by the community. Let the means of production, i. e., land and machines, then, be owned by the community, and the wealth produced distributed by the community as evenly as possible among its various members. Then we shall have all the blessings of modern scientific methods of production without the evils of enslavement, insecurity, unequal distribution of wealth, poverty, unemployment, crime and class-hatred. Production not being for private profit but for meeting the needs of the people, the wastage attending competitive production will cease, there will be no exploitation of the worker or of weaker nations, and no incentive for war. Human considerations, i. e., the needs of the people, which we found had completely been ignored in the mad pursuit of private gain under Capitalism, will be restored to their central place, and the economic order will have no other object than that of producing what is needed by the commu-

nity. Instead of strife, conflict and violence, there will be co-operation, a sharing of things in common, fellow-feeling and peace. Such in essence is what is held out by Socialism. The whole centres round production and distribution not being left any more to the selfishness of individuals but being carried on jointly by society in the interests of all its members. Hence the name *Socialism*, as compared with Capitalism which from this point of view may be called Individualism in large-scale enterprise.

**1. Historical:**

The idea of social ownership of production and sharing of things in common was not original to Socialism. Such an arrangement existed in some form or other even in early times, when a whole community or village held land and other property in common and distributed wealth among its members. But Socialism, as we understand it today, arose as a reaction to the evils of individualism in large-scale factory production. In the first half of the last century, in England, Germany and France, factory production had brought many evils to the workers, and thinking men in these countries sought various ways of overcoming these evils. Such attempts as advocated abolition of private ownership and institution of social control were called Socialism, or Collectivism, or Social Democracy.

Robert Owen, a factory owner in England, is said to have used the word Socialism for the first time about 1830. A great humanitarian, he was sensitive to the sufferings of the factory workers and desired to have workers' co-operative societies to run industries and to share between themselves the wealth so produced. Side by side, the workers' trade union movement developed on different lines, aiming merely at securing higher wages and better conditions. But naturally it was influenced by socialist ideas put forward by Owen and a few others at that time, and in its turn influenced greatly the development of Socialism.

On the continent of Europe, besides Socialism of the type of Owen's, a new creed was gaining ground. This was *Anarchism*, i.e., as the word signifies, doing without government. The Anarchists were also socialists, but they did not like the idea

of 'everything being controlled by the State, as under orthodox Socialism. They placed a high value on the freedom of the individual, and did not wish to rescue the worker from the tyranny of the capitalist only to place him under the tyranny of the State. They declared that that government was best which governed the least. Their ideal was perfect freedom for all, each person of his own free will respecting the rights of his neighbour and willingly co-operating with him for the good of all. The socialists agreed with the anarchist ideal, but considered that to bring about such an ideal state of affairs it would be necessary for the present to have a centralised and strong socialist government. Anarchism, fine as it is in theory, became in the hands of ignorant, excitable and dissatisfied followers, an excuse for all kinds of violence—terrorism, bomb-throwing and shooting—perpetrated against kings and those in authority. Naturally it was suppressed with a firm hand, and in spite of leading anarchists repudiating such violence, the movement gradually faded away.

Socialism developed chiefly along two main lines. One, which we may call Evolutionary, believed that the ideal cannot be achieved overnight, but that people's minds and hearts, including that of the capitalist, would have to be converted through the years to the socialist ideal. It believes that ultimately men are good enough and reasonable enough to change the economic order if they do not believe it to be right or sensible. Its appeal therefore is to benevolence, justice and rationality in every individual, and its faith is that, in the end, justice and right will prevail. Such a view has come to be called *Utopian* or *Idealistic Socialism*, or *Gradualism* or *Reformism*, and in Europe it goes by the name of *Social Democracy*. Those who believe in this theory advocate peaceful constitutional methods of reform. Naturally this is the type most popular in England, where the workers are comparatively prosperous, and where Socialism is advocated by well-to-do intellectuals who are not prepared to sell all that they have and give to the poor, so long as the rest of society is run on capitalistic lines. They quite sincerely believe in the ideal, it is true, but consider it unwise violently to put it into effect, rooting out the present economic order and starting all over again. They hold

that Capitalism is moving towards socialisation, and that what is required is to prepare people intellectually and emotionally for the new social order, and to help hasten the process of reform. The adherents of this view enter Parliament, become Cabinet ministers and hope to convert capitalist governments gradually into socialist action. But once in power they tend to compromise till in practice there is little to distinguish them from blue-blooded anti-socialist Tories. The most moderate brand of this school in England is represented by the Fabian Society, very learned, highly respectable, and believing in the "inevitability of gradualness," and "moving fast slowly"! It is called *Fabianism* after Fabius, an old Roman general, who instead of directly fighting the enemy, gradually wore him out.

As against this, is the Revolutionary school, which does not believe that Capitalism is going to yield to reason and to moral appeal to put an end to itself. It argues that even when concessions are made by the capitalist, they are only owing to the sheer force of physical circumstances, and that they are never of such a nature as to impair in any way his retention of power. This school is not much impressed by the reforms achieved by capturing power in the government. On the other hand, it is inclined to think that Parliament and the outward trappings of democracy, in which the reformist socialist so pathetically pins his faith, are nothing but delusion and a snare, and that through them the capitalist only holds on to his place of privilege all the more firmly. The adherents of this school believe that the capitalist is well capable of using reason and morality to justify his own hold, so that he will not abdicate unless he is faced with a physically superior power which he is unable to resist. It is argued that it is necessary therefore for the working class to organise itself into a mighty power for the onslaught, that it is groups and classes which are in history the driving forces of social change, and that therefore it is useless to seek merely to convert individuals. Reason and morality, it is said, are futile without the backing of organised group force, that therefore salvation lies in the working class organising itself to wrest power from the capitalist by means of a revolution. This revolutionary school is called by various

names, such as *Marxism, Scientific Socialism, Bolshevism, Socialism* or *Russian Socialism,* and *Communism.* When Communism is contrasted with Socialism, this revolutionary school is referred to as Communism, as compared with what we have called the evolutionary type of Socialism. Otherwise the word Socialism is used loosely for both types of theory.

The foremost among Revolutionary Socialists, and one who contributed most to organise the movement, and give its theories scientific and philosophical backing, was a German Jew called *Karl Marx* (1818-1883). He was a student of history, philosophy and law in Germany and took to journalism. His newspaper brought him into conflict with the State, and he therefore went to Paris where he read much socialist and anarchist literature, and became converted to Socialism. Here he met Friedrich Engels, a German factory owner in England, who had come under the influence of Robert Owen and turned socialist. Thenceforward Marx and Engels worked together. In 1848 they issued the Communist Manifesto criticising the democratic cries of liberty, equality and fraternity, and pointing out that these slogans had become but a cloak for capitalist states and left the condition of the people unchanged. They developed their own theories regarding Socialism, and ended the Manifesto with the words which have sent a thrill through the five continents: 'Workers of the world, unite. You have nothing to lose but your chains, and have a world to win.'

In 1864 Marx got together in London various groups of socialists from several European countries to form an "International Workingmen's Association." This is usually now referred to as the *First International.* This organisation was meant to co-ordinate the activities of the socialist groups of various countries and to get them to organise and educate the workers in socialistic theories according to a well thought out plan, till the hour came for action. But it did not survive for more than eight years. The first socialistic revolt took place in Paris in 1871, when the common people sought to set up their own Government in Paris called the Paris Commune. This was crushed mercilessly and after that all European Governments dealt harshly with worker's organisations. So

much so, that the headquarters of the International was shifted in 1872 to New York, and being too far away from workers' activities in Europe it gradually came to an end there.

In France, Socialism assumed a slightly altered form owing to the influence of Anarchism. This is called *Syndicalism,* from the French word *syndicat,* meaning a workers' organisation or trade union. Like the anarchists, the syndicalists tried to do away with the state, or at least to limit its power as much as possible. So they wanted each industry to be self-governing or controlled by the workers in that industry, i. e., by its syndicate. The Government would consist, according to them, of representatives elected by the various syndicates to a general council which would look after the affairs of the whole country, much like a parliament, without the power to interfere in the internal management of the industry. To bring about such a state, the syndicalists advocated the general strike, or a strike of workers all over the country, bringing the industrial life of the nation to a standstill till their aim was realised. The Marxists however do not approve of Syndicalism.

In 1889 a Workers' International was established at Amsterdam. This is known as the *Second International.* It lasted till 1914 when the Great War put an end to it. This International consisted of numerous moderate and respectable people who later took high office in their countries. They went into Parliament, and even became prime ministers, chancellors and presidents of their countries, and once in power they forgot the workers' cause and became mere cogs in the capitalistic machinery of Government.

The Russian Socialists were faced with a crisis in 1903, as they were divided sharply between the Evolutionary and Revolutionary schools of Socialism. Under Lenin, a great majority of them decided for the revolutionary view. Lenin would have nothing to do with the parliamentarianism of Western socialists, which he considered demoralising and fit only for climbers and job-hunters. The socialist party in Russia thus split in two, those favouring revolutionary action constituting the majority or *Bolsheviki* (which is the Russian

for majority), and the evolutionary school the minority, or *Mensheviki* (meaning minority). Lenin's party being in the majority was henceforth known as *Bolshevik*.

One of the weapons decided on by socialists to gain their ends as against the Government was the strike, i. e., the simultaneous cessation of work by labourers. In Russia, this weapon was being used from as early as 1903 against the tyranny and oppression of Tsardom. At various centres, especially in large cities like Petersburg and Moscow, an organisation was set up to run strikes. This was called the *Soviet* of that centre. "Soviet" means council. It was at first only a committee for organising strikes and later became a local committee for guiding the workers' movement, and gradually even assumed power over the town committees or municipalities. When the Revolution took place in 1917, it is these Soviets that arose, got rid of Tsardom, and under Lenin set up the U. S. S. R., the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

After the War was over in 1919, Lenin started a new Workers' International in Moscow. This was through and through communistic and is called the *Third International*, or the *Communist International*, or the *Comintern* (from 'Communist International'). It is thoroughly revolutionary, and bitterly opposed to Capitalism and Imperialism in any form. Far from coming to terms with them, as the parlia- mentarian socialists do, it seeks to destroy them root and and branch and establish a dictatorship of the proletariat or rule of the members of the working class which will completely wipe out the propertied classes. Members of the previous Inter- national for whom all this is too hasty, radical, and revolu- tionary, have revived the Second International. The result is that today Socialism is divided into two schools, one violently opposed to the other—the evolutionary parliamentary school of the Second International, and the revolutionary radical group of the Third International, each hating the other even more than they hate the common enemy, Capitalism. But lately, when Russia favouring a national policy had to give up its international character, more especially in the present War, the Comintern has had to be wound up, and so it was in 1943. Those who revolted against such nationalist policy, which has

been consistently pursued under Stalin, the present dictator, claim under the leadership of Trotsky to constitute the *Fourth International* formed in 1936.

Since the establishment of the Soviet Government in Russia, people have come to regard Socialism as being chiefly of the revolutionary type. It looks for its guiding principles to Karl Marx who expounded them in his great book, Das Kapital, or Capital, written in 1867. We shall barely mention one or two of its important teachings.

## 2. Marxism:

*The Materialistic Interpretation of History:*

Marx was one of the first to bring a strictly scientific mind to bear on human history, and from an objective dispassionate study of the history of peoples to deduce certain principles according to which a man's life is determined from age to age. According to him, if we would help mankind forward, we should first understand the laws in accordance with which human society lives and evolves, and then putting ourselves in line with the movement of nature we can go forward with all the strength of the universe behind us to our goal. This attempt at a non-metaphysical, scientific study of history and human institutions is in itself a tremendous contribution which Marx has made, and which has affected the thought of thousands of people since his day and even of those who are his avowed opponents. Owing to this scientific backing which Marx gave the socialist creed, his views have merited the name of *Scientific Socialism* as opposed to the vague yearnings for reform which had so far prevailed amongst socialists. Let us consider some of the doctrines to which it has given rise.

(*A*) *The Marxian Dialectic:—*

Influenced by the great philosopher Hegel, who taught in Germany about this time, i. e., in the first half of the nineteenth century, Marx tended to reduce human history, past, present and future, to a strict logical sequence, characterised by all the inevitability of scientific necessity. Such a logical movement was called by Hegel, Dialectic. Dialectic as developed by the Greek philosophers was the art of argument. It became the

name for a method of arguing by the solution of successive contradictions in philosophy, or "Dialogue." Later it was claimed, more especially by Hegel, who sought elaborately to demonstrate it, that not only development in argument but also actual development in nature and history underwent the same necessary process. Hegel analysed the movement of thought in reasoning, and concluded that it invariably swung from an affirmation to a denial of this affirmation, and then to a middle position which did justice both to the affirmation and to the denial. He called the three stages involved thesis, antithesis and synthesis, and looked upon history as but a reflection of the same dialectical process, wherein certain Ideas developed themselves in the outer world. Marx however did not accept the dominant role ascribed by Hegel to Ideas in history, and declared that while material things developed according to the Dialectic, they did so of themselves and not as just reflections of the development of independently existing Ideas. On the contrary, according to Marx, it was the Ideas which were the reflections of material reality. Accordingly, Marx interpreted each stage in human history as inevitably giving birth to its opposite, which in time destroys it and establishes a new stage. Thus Capitalism (thesis) as it advances inevitably leads to a working class movement (antithesis) which is opposed to it, grows in power and finally destroys it, setting up Communism (synthesis), a new classless economic order. To illustrate, the capitalist at the start has only a little wealth with which he employs a few hands. From so doing he obtains more wealth, and with the wealth so obtained he increases his business and employs more hands. Thus as Capitalism grows, increasing in capital and power, the working class grows, increasing in numbers and strength, one giving birth inevitably to the other, but both fundamentally opposed to each other, till the working class becomes so huge and powerful that it is able to throw off the tyranny of the capitalist class and run the industry in the interests of all, as once the capitalist class is wiped out there is no class distinction left, and all belong to one classless society. History thus moves from stage to stage with a logical necessity and always through conflict, whereby the previous stage is

destroyed by something which necessarily developed out of it.

*Criticism:*

(1) Marx tended to interpret this in such a rigid manner that he held that there was no escape from this grim movement of history. Whether human affairs proceed thus, by hard and fast rules, with all the certainty of mathematical necessity, is doubtful. (2) This necessity Marx sought to establish by applying to human affairs the Dialectic which was obtained by Hegel from an analysis of the movement of thought. But in so far as abstract thought is not the same as the storm and stress of life, what holds true of abstract thought may be just what will not hold in the realm of life. Such thoroughgoing rationalism which identifies stages in historical development with stages in the reasoning process may be understandable in the hands of an Absolute Idealist like Hegel for whom Reality is ultimately of the nature of Mind or Reason, but it goes ill with Marxism which likes to describe itself as materialistic. So much so, that the epithet, Dialectical Materialism, which is often used to denote the Marxist position in this regard, may well be considered to be a contradiction in terms. (3) Inconsistently enough, the Marxist adopts the Dialectical method as a device to give his conclusions the stamp of rational necessity. But what if we refuse to accept the validity of the Hegelian Dialectic in the realm of human affairs ? After all, it cannot claim to be a self-evident principle. Even if we do accept it, how if we are not prepared to apply it, as Marx does, to establish Communism as the final goal of human history ? For it would seem that it will not be difficult to find a thesis and an antithesis to support any conclusion one wants. Thus one may regard British rule in India as thesis, the national movement for complete independence as antithesis, and Dominion status within the British Empire as synthesis. To be bound up thus with the British Empire will then be the final consummation of Indian History, necessary, inevitable and meekly to be accepted! Absurd as the argument in this form sounds, for America and Ireland achieved independence without passing through the stage of a Dominion, it serves to

show up the defect which underlies the Dialectic when it is used to prove the necessity for Communism. It leaves one with the feeling that the Dialectic when applied in the realm of human affairs cannot suffice to prove the necessity of anything. (4) Besides, it would follow that if Marx's theory were true, Communism would be established only where Capitalism had reached its fullest development. This is belied by history, as Communism has been established in an industrially backward country like Russia and not in highly developed capitalistic countries such as Britain or America. (5) This is because Marx did not foresee the improvements which were later effected in working conditions and wages through the efforts of strong trade unions and through social legislation enforced by organised public opinion in these countries. These improvements have tended to keep the workers from revolting and have thus falsified Marx's view. (6) Further, Marx's theory has failed in its estimation of the propertyless or partly propertied middle classes, who today upset his predictions by joining the capitalist class in Fascist and imperialist countries, and give Capitalism a renewed lease of life against Communism. They do not go to swell the ranks of the proletariat as he had expected. (7) Moreover, Marx does not appear to have given sufficient importance to the spirit of nationalism which is preventing the workers of the world from uniting against the capitalists. Nationalism seems today to be a greater uniting factor than class consciousness, with the result that the working class of one nation is prepared to slay the working class of another. This is not strange either. For the British worker, for instance, obtains his livelihood from the capitalistic system which exploits India. It is against his interests therefore to put an end to this exploitation. He becomes therefore as staunch an imperialist as his capitalist employer. These factors vitiate Marx's conclusions.

Nevertheless, Marx's interpretation of history as a record of conflict and class struggle is valuable. It has certainly thrown a flood of light on modern events in various parts of the world, revealing them to be nothing but a life and death struggle between the forces of Capitalism and of the people

exploited by it. With innumerable illustrations, Marx shows how such class struggle went on also in the past, leading from Feudalism to Capitalism. According to him, the last class struggle is taking place today between Capitalism and the working class. Such struggles are inevitable so long as one class exploits another. But when with Socialism all exploitation ceases and a classless society is established, then there will be no more class war, and the State's chief business of coercing one class to conform to the wishes of another will cease. The State will then be unnecessary and the anarchist's dream of a stateless society and self-governing individuals will have been accomplished. Even if this theory did nothing else, it at least served to make the rising revolutionary organisations of the working class feel that victory was of a certainty theirs by the very law of the universe, and that it was a privilege to help in the great movement of History towards the ultimate goal of mankind.

(*B*) *Material conditions as determinative of Social Change:*

Another very illuminating conception which Marx put forward is that the whole fabric of human society—its laws institutions, customs, political structure and even its morality—is affected by the methods of production it employs at any one time. They are basic, and around them grows up the complexity of social life at every stage. As the methods of production change, great historical and social changes follow. Thus, as the tools and implements worked by hand give place to huge machines run by power, they produce an altogether different type of social and economic order, and a new morality and culture result, producing a tremendous difference in the life and thought of the people. For instance, even in our own country, the industrialism of the West has shaken to the roots the village organisation, traditions, customs and religion of our people. The old-time self-sufficient village, caste and joint-family are fast disappearing. The leisurely ways of old, neighbourly interest in one's fellows, gentleness, courtesy and human kindness are giving place to love of wealth, material comfort, artificiality, show, and an individualism which has no time or thought for others.

However true Marx's views in this regard may be, his attempt to interpret all history entirely in terms of economics seems unwarranted. There is no doubt that the search for bread is one of the primal urges of human beings, and much that we find in human history can be explained best only in terms of economics. Nevertheless, it must be pointed out that other factors like knowledge, morality, art and religion also exercise a powerful influence on social changes. It is no use fixing on one factor alone, viz., the economic, however important it may be, to the extent of overlooking these which also control man's life. This too exclusive an emphasis on the economic aspect of man is precisely the bane of our age and is responsible for the terrible strife and bloodshed into which the world is plunged today. We must resist such temptation to reduce the rich diversity of human life to terms of some one single element within it.

A logical outcome of the position that methods of production in themselves account for changes in moral and social behaviour is the Marxist view that they constitute the ultimate test of the stage of civilisation reached by a people. The more complicated and efficient the method of production the more civilised the ones using it. Civilisation thus becomes a matter of the outer environment, of advance in tools and implements used, rather than a matter of man's inner development. Consequently a Buddha, a Jesus, a Plato or a Shakespeare would on this hypothesis have to be regarded as primitive as compared with the factory hand or the lorrydriver of today, who may indulge in drink and vice. To state the position thus suffices to expose the fallacy on which the theory rests. Civilisation, we may grant, often results in better and more efficient methods of production, and to that extent may be inferred from their use. But to regard them as the cause and civilisation as nothing more than their effect seems entirely unwarranted.

Further, this too exclusive an emphasis in Marx's theory on the part played by the material environment on man must, if consistently adhered to, inevitably lead to fatalism, or a feeling of helplessness in the face of evil. As the material environment is everything, man can do nothing. So,

if we would bring about a just economic order, it is no use appealing to the conscience of people. We must first change the human environment, and then the individual's outlook and conduct will change of themselves. And if the material environment is changed first irrespective of people's consciences, such a change will in that very fact be a violent transformation of the environment, or revolution. Hence it is that violence and revolution are a fundamental part of this creed as over against the method of argument and persuasion advocated by the 'idealistic' socialists.

It is true that Marx himself did not mean his theory to be understood in quite such an extreme form, for he himself fully believed in appealing to men's reason and conscience for bringing about the desired socialist state. Else, there was no point in his taking such tremendous pains to argue out in his voluminous work, Das Kapital, the principles he wanted to teach. If the individual counts for nothing, of what use was it to educate him regarding the processes of historical development? Besides, it is certain that Marx recognised that even if the average individual was but a creature of his environment, there were always creative personalities who were capable of rising above the environment and transforming it. But if it be accordingly accepted that the exceptional individual does have powers to shape and create his enviroment to however small a degree it may be, then though we may agree with Marx that a man's physical and social environment plays a very important part in shaping his thought and conduct, we cannot accept the materialistic assumption that the individual is always a passive sport of circumstances over which he has no control.

The difficulty with the materialistic philosophers of the last century is that, impressed as they were with the phenomenal progress of physical science at that time, they tried to reduce everything—even the creative activity of man—to terms of physical necessity. What we need to remember is that, though this creative activity may be determined by the environment and does not exist or function apart from it, it refuses to be dissolved into the environment or to be completely identified with it. Gandhiji is in a very true sense the

child of his time. His life, his work, his teachings are what they are because of conditions prevailing in our country today. Nevertheless, he is also in a very real sense the father of his time. He has produced an environment which is beyond the imagination of the generation which preceded him—the Indian woman coming out into the streets to challenge and face the armed police, the timid peasant refusing to pay taxes to the mightiest empire the world has seen, and the brave Pathan with no thought of retaliation baring his breast to receive the bullet. It is a miraculous transformation which could not have taken place but for Gandhiji's creative personality. It is no use overlooking such facts in the interests of preconceived notions of the environment being everything and the individual nothing. We shall have to admit that even as the environment makes the man, the man also has the power to make the environment. The two act and re-act on each other. And if it is agreed that thus the individual does have some power to act on his environment, then the materialistic assumption that it is the material and social forces alone that count in shaping history falls to the ground.

(*C*) *The Marxist method of violence and class War :*

It would mean in that case that it is possible to appeal to individuals, to their reason and conscience, and to expect thus to be able to transform the environment. If this be so, then no more can it be granted that there is any need for a violent revolution, where the appeal is merely to physical force. Nor would there be need for class war, whereby the old ruling class is ruthlessly suppressed and crushed out of existence, for the capitalist class must also be credited with the capacity to yield to what is reasonable and right. This does not mean of course that all that is necessary to bring about the new economic order is to petition on bended knees, for that is not, as Marx warns us, the way that anything can be achieved. Mere parliamentary agitation and liberalism are not likely to accomplish much. What is necessary is to educate the minds and appeal to the hearts of people so as to establish a mass movement disciplined along non-violent lines, whereby to make the stoniest heart yield. Revolution in this sense

may be necessary, a revolution which is peaceful and non-violent. Not a violent revolution, for violence can only beget violence and can never hope to convert the oppressor, whereas we know in our own country how much even an imperfectly non-violent mass movement can accomplish through winning the respect of the opponent. In a non-violent revolution the appeal is to the mind and conscience of individuals, while in a violent revolution it is to sheer physical force. The Marxist has of necessity to resort to physical force as because of his materialist assumptions the moral appeal is practically useless, in his opinion.

For Marx the necessity of class war and violence is established by the Dialectic. The antithesis being the very opposite of the thesis, there cannot but be enmity and opposition between them, and it is only in and through such conflict that the higher stage, the synthesis, can come into being. But if, as we have suggested above, doubt can be thrown on the validity of the Dialectic when applied to human affairs, the bottom is knocked out of the Marxist claim that class struggle and violence are inevitable if humanity is to move to a higher stage of economic and social organisation. The Marxist will have to see if his theory of class war is capable of standing on its own legs as a scientific generalisation independent of the Hegelian Dialectic. But this is not attempted, and so one cannot help feeling that the necessity of class war and violence remains unproved.

Further, how the Marxist hopes to secure the equal welfare of all and to establish brotherliness within the nation by means of class war, it is difficult to see, for the idea is in itself manifestly self-contradictory. Collective selfishness on the part of the working class cannot somehow give rise later to unselfishness. Men do not gather grapes from thorns or figs from thistles. You cannot obtain a society based on co-operation and love, as the Marxist wants, by appealing to selfishness and hatred. Class war, it is certain, can only produce within the nation injustice, bitterness and strife which cannot be wiped out by getting rid of the unwanted capitalist class. Moreover, even if the capitalist class goes, there is nothing to prevent a class of capable individuals taking posses-

sion of the machinery of Government under Communism, and exploiting the rest—in which case again there will be need for war against such individuals, thus plunging the country in perpetual strife. Fraternal feeling within the nation, it would appear, can come about only by the non-violent method of conversion. The surest way to bring about unbrotherliness and hatred is, on the other hand, to put an end to those who oppose you, which is the method of class war advocated by Marxism.

Similarly, it would indeed be a strange kind of brotherhood that would spring up in the world if Russia were to invade any country it chose to in order to establish its creed. There is a danger of Russia doing this, for according to one of its doctrines Communism cannot be established completely in any one country till it has been established throughout the world. Far from bringing about international brotherhood, Russia would then be a constant menace to world-peace. However praiseworthy one's creed may be, surely it must spread by appealing to the heart of the people, and not by thrusting itself on them at the point of the sword. The surest way of defeating even the noblest of purposes, it would seem, is to seek to propagate it by violence. This is the simple lesson based on the everyday experience of us as individuals that we as nations have still to learn. A shopkeeper does not seek to obtain customers by driving them to his shop with a whip; he wins them by means of sweet words and kind acts. It is non-violence that can make friends and keep them.

Unfortunately, the sublime ideals of Communism are yoked on to the rough and ready method of violence, which allures by seeming to inaugurate a new order overnight, but which in the end puts off indefinitely, and makes impossible of achievement, what the communist so ardently desires, viz., equality and world brotherhood. It is the communist's eagerness for quick results that makes him resort to class war and violence to achieve his goal. But here as elsewhere, it would seem, that after all what appears to be the longest way round is the shortest way to success, and what seems, on the other hand, to be a short-cut, viz., violence is not only the longest in

the end but, what is worse, is also the surest way to failure and self-destruction.

Thus both the theories of violent revolution and ruthless class war, which follow from the 'Materialist' view of human nature and the 'Marxian Dialectic' seem unacceptable. It may be that a violent wresting of power has till now taken place in history but that it always must do so does not seem to follow. On the other hand, the value of historical study must be to warn us against repeating the follies of our ancestors. For if history teaches anything it is that violence perpetuates and increases opposition, while it is non-violence alone that can win over opposition and thus bring about a permanent and abiding solution.

### 3. The Essence of Socialism:

But to be a socialist, it is not necessary to be a Marxist or to believe in every detail of theory put forward by this or that socialist. Thus one may not feel inclined to believe that progress in history takes place in accordance with absolutely inviolable laws such as determine, for example, the movement of the planets, leaving no scope whatsoever for any departure from the norm, or for any unpredictable development. Nor is it necessary to believe that without class war and a violent revolution it is impossible to establish Socialism. These are not a necessary part of the socialist faith. There have been many thinking men who have not found it possible to accept such doctrines, but who still remain staunch socialists.

Nor is it necessary for socialists to uphold and justify all that has been done or is being done in Soviet Russia. Of course it is true that since Socialism has been attempted in Russia, conditions there must help us to judge what Socialism implies. At the same time we must remember that, after all, in Russia Socialism is at an elementary experimental stage, and that, being hedged in on all sides by unsympathetic, nay, hostile capitalistic countries, it has had to adopt certain measures which appear to belie its professions. The peasants being unaccustomed to the new order, it has had at times to give in

to private working up of land and appropriation of profits. The people have had to work harder even than in capitalistic countries, and at the same time to do with much less, as they had to spend all their energy and wealth on manufacture of capital goods, i. e., machinery and armaments. The State has had to control education in order that the principles of the new order may be properly assimilated and understood by the people. It has had accordingly to use very repressive measures to prevent any other school of thought from invading the country, and it has had to press people into a uniform mould. It has had to arm itself to the teeth to protect itself against hostile capitalistic countries, to give up for the time being its internationalism, and even to join one capitalistic power in war against another to save itself. All this and more has Russia done, and such instances are snatched at greedily by those who are opposed to Socialism to fling in its face, as though in Soviet Russia Socialism had reached its final form, and as though it were impossible to conceive of socialistic ideas being applied in any other way than they have been applied there. No, it seems to us that Socialism is too great an idea to be rejected after one attempt to put it in practice, that it demands too drastic changes in the old order to be capable of being achieved in a generation or two, and that even if it failed miserably at the first experiment—which it certainly has not in Russia in spite of opposition from every quarter—it cannot be dismissed lightheartedly. This means that Socialism must be considered on its own merits, independently of any undesirable form that it may have had to assume today in Russia.

What then is Socialism? Stripped of its Marxist covering and of the particular form it has assumed in Soviet Russia, Socialism would be what is believed in common by every socialist of whatever brand, including Marx and the Russian communists, namely, that the greatest well-being of all will result when the community undertakes collectively the work of production and distribution. It is this doctrine which is fundamental to all schools of Socialism, and it is in this its essential form that we shall hereafter consider it.

## 4. The Case for Socialism :

*(A) Advantages relating to Production and Distribution :*

*(1) Plentiful production of goods :*—The most attractive feature of Socialism is that it seems possible under it to enjoy all the blessings of large-scale production without having to suffer its evils. We have today become accustomed to innumerable conveniences, which science and modern invention have made possible. We cannot do without them. Why should we, if we can find a way of obtaining them that will do no injury to any one ? To be comfortable, to surround oneself with good things, to have all we need is surely no sin. Today science has taught us to produce all we want. If anything, the problem in capitalistic countries before the present War was to restrict production. More goods poured into the market than could be consumed, and they had either to be destroyed, or production closed down leading to unemployment and misery, or it had forcibly to be restricted by the State. Strange situation, indeed, that people should have to be forced to produce less. Restricting production has meant throwing a large percentage of people into perpetual unemployment, and using capital and land resources far below their capacity, and leaving many technical processes unexploited or under-exploited. It only goes to show that our problem today is not how to produce but how to have the goods consumed so as to bring a profit to the capitalist. If however the State were the producer and there were no question of profit, it is obvious that all the man-power, capital, land resources and improvements in technique could be utilised to the fullest so that the people could have a plentiful supply of everything. Without fear of over-production we can then go on applying science to increase production. If in spite of having to produce less, science has enabled us to produce abundantly, how much more can we not advance in production if we deliberately set about to invent ways and means of increasing it ? It is only under Socialism, then, that we shall be able to derive the full benefits of the application of modern science to production and obtain a plentiful supply of goods.

When science thus throws open to us the door to heaven on earth—plenty of wealth and comfort—why not enter freely

and enjoy its benefits? The only objection so far was that if we entered, we could do so only by riding on the backs of innumerable others, who thus became destined to a life of beasts of burden. But Socialism declares that no one need ride on any one else's back, but that if each of us enters on his own legs, all can equally obtain the benefits of heaven. The solution is simple, seems reasonable and just, and is certainly attractive.

(2) *Machine as servant:*—Nor can there be any objection to the machine as such. The machine in itself is not a power for evil. On the other hand, it is good. Whether it is good or evil in its effect on us, depends entirely on the way we use it. Fire is most useful. We use it every day for cooking our food, for lighting our houses, and for keeping us warm when it is cold. But if we misuse it, and let it burn our houses so that they are destroyed, it is our own fault. So why blame the machine? Let us use it in such a way that the enormous wealth it produces can be enjoyed by all alike, instead of as at present only by a few. Socialism therefore proposes to retain the large machine, and to see that it is not used for making the rich richer, but to enrich all alike.

(3) *Group control as required by the nature of machines:*—Further, Socialism or collectivist control of industry is that to which modern industrialism seems inevitably to be leading man. Even under Capitalism, no more is industry in the hands of individuals but is passing into the hands of groups. What was formerly conducted by individuals separately, each by himself, is now being conducted collectively, by groups of individuals—trusts or combines—which are able to do the work much more efficiently and cheaply. The tendency therefore even under Capitalism is towards greater and greater centralisation and group control. What more logical development of this than that production should pass completely from the hands of individuals and become centred in the State? It is sheer folly to resist what follows from the very nature of the mammoth machines of today, which necessitate centralisation and group ownership and control.

(4) *Production made Scientific and Economic:*—Not only the machines drive us to this end, but also scientific and

economic considerations. When several individuals produce in order to make profit for themselves, they often each produce the same things and compete with each other, leading thus to a great deal of economic chaos, and waste of time, labour and resources. But when production is in the hands of the State, it can be planned and carried on with the greatest economy, cutting down all waste and duplication of effort. The resources of the country can be used with economy. Production can be directed to the manufacture of all such goods and in such quantities as are required by the nation. Industry can take full advantage of improvements effected in technique. Today managers, being concerned only with immediate profits, may not be willing to scrap existing machinery, and may shrink from the cost of adopting new methods, although from the point of view of the country they may be following comparatively uneconomic methods. But no such considerations exist for the State which under the guidance of experts may be expected to run the industry on the most scientific lines.

(5) *Inconsistency in modern distribution removed* :—Further, the contradiction which is at the heart of the present economic order, where the methods of production are collectivised or centralised, while the profits accruing are still left to the sweet will of individuals will be removed. Production under industrialism is collective, but distribution under Capitalism is still individualistic. This accounts for all the evils of Capitalism. If an individual produces by himself, as he did in the days of old, he has every right to whatever profit he makes. But when large numbers of people join in production, as happens under modern industrialism, how can we still regard a group of privileged individuals as having a right to distribute the profits as they please, as though the wealth produced was exclusively theirs? Surely it belongs of right to all those who cooperated in production. It is an anomaly to retain the old individualistic method of distribution alongside of the modern social methods of production. Socialism therefore seeks to remove this contradiction, and to socialise distribution even as production has today become a collective undertaking.

In these respects, Socialism attempts to do nothing more than to get rid of some of the inconsistencies and anomalies

of modern economic life, and to bring reason and system into it. It must therefore be accepted by whoever is convinced that humanity cannot do without large-scale centralised production.

(*B*) *Advantages relating to man and his development:*

(*1*) *Human needs at the centre of economic life:*—Another attractive feature of Socialism is that it seeks to humanise economic life. Capitalism is based on the profit motive, each man trying to obtain as much wealth as possible for himself, nevermind what happens to anybody else, on the maxim: each man to himself, the devil take the hindermost. It is thus altogether materialistic, crassly selfish and grossly inhuman. It follows the law of the jungle, heedless of morality, and is devoid of all human considerations. Socialism declares that this is altogether wrong. Production must not be for private profit, but for meeting the needs of man. It thus restores man to his rightful place at the very centre of the economic system—man who had by Capitalism been reduced to a mere tool for enriching his exploiter. Henceforth production and distribution are to revolve round him.

(*2*) *Ethical—altruism to displace egoism:*—The appeal of Socialism is therefore essentially ethical. It is sensitive to injustice, suppression, exploitation, poverty and suffering, and is out to rid the world of them. It finds that all these evils can be traced to selfishness which lies at the heart of capitalistic economy and is leading man to ruin and destruction. It would set up in its place altruism or love of one's neighbour as oneself. It will not content itself with merely preaching unselfishness, but it will transform the economic system so that the evironment will not breed selfishness and greed in the individual, but in their place fellow-feeling and comradeship. Today, it no doubt wins the allegiance of the Have-nots, partly because of their desire to get for themselves something of the wealth of the Haves. This is natural under modern conditions. But in so far as Socialism is not a mere attempt to take the wealth of the rich and give it to the poor, but to establish a system where wealth will not accrue to the individual but to the community which will then enjoy it in

common, it would be a sheer travesty of Socialism to regard it as teaching nothing but selfishness and greed all over again. As things are today, the strongest appeal in everyday life is made to motives which run directly counter to the encouragement of mutual sympathy and generous dealing between man and man. As against this, Socialism would establish an order which would lead people to work for each other and share things in common. Instead of cut-throat competition which makes each man rise against his fellow, it would establish cooperation, each joining with the other in work and sharing together the fruits of their labour. Instead of the capitalist slogan "Each man to himself," its cry is "Each for all and all for each." Socialism has undying faith in the innate goodness of human nature, in the capacity of the individual to work for the common good without expectation of private gain.

(3) *Religious at heart*:—Rightly indignant at orthodox religion which appears everywhere to be in league with power and wealth to support the *status quo* of privilege for the few as against poverty for the many, Socialism raises to the status of a new religion its gospel of bringing light to those that sit in darkness, of filling the hungry with good things, of releasing the captives and of setting at liberty them that are bound. Of its followers it expects practical sympathy with the downtrodden and the oppressed of the world, and the greatest sacrifice and suffering for the realisation of its ideal. It calls for faith and zeal not unlike that of the religious fanatic. Far from being irreligious and materialistic, as it is usually said to be, it is at heart religious, ethical and idealistic. From this point of view Socialism deserves nothing but admiration and respect from all who are eager that poverty and oppression should cease and in their place prosperity and freedom be established.

(4) *Poverty removed*:—Under Socialism, the State will undertake production in the interests of all, like it runs the Post and Telegraph and other public utilities, not for the profit of A, B, or C, but for the convenience of everybody. When this is done, it expects that most of the evils of today will vanish. Poverty exists because today wealth accumulates in

the hands of a few, but when distribution is undertaken by the State in the interests of all, no one will have either too much or too little. The State will produce all that is required for the community; and as no one will be allowed to appropriate for himself what is produced, wealth will be available for all, and poverty will be no more.

(5) *Unemployment abolished*:—It will not be possible for a few individuals who own the instruments of production, as today, to bestow employment on whom they will and on any terms they please; for these instruments will not be owned by them but by the community. The worker will therefore not have to cringe and submit to all kinds of humiliation in order to keep himself in employment. Today he is a wage slave, always having to please his master if his wife and children are not to starve. Even with all his servility, his services are liable to be dispensed with, if there is trade depression, or if a labour-saving device has been adopted. He is haunted therefore always by the fear of unemployment. Under Socialism, on the other hand, every one can be sure of employment, as it will be the responsibility of the State to provide its people with work as it does with bread. If the number of people employed in an industry is more than is wanted, it can either shift a few to where labour is required or reduce the number of hours of work for all without however reducing their remuneration.

(6) *Freedom from insecurity*:—Thus the weight of anxiety under which the worker labours today will be lifted from him, and he would have obtained the greatest gift of Socialism—freedom from insecurity. For, after all, what a man desires is not wealth so much as the certainty that he and his family will be secure from starvation and want. When he has this assurance, as he has under Socialism, he has all he wants.

(7) *Freedom and domocracy made possible*:—The capitalists speak of freedom for the individual. But without freedom from want, which is assured to the worker only under Socialism, all other freedoms are meaningless and incapable of being enjoyed. For example, under Capitalism a man is said to be free to choose his work. But what choice has he when for lack of the required training, education or influence, many jobs are

beyond his reach ? These freedoms which are so much paraded under Capitalism exist only for the privileged few, not for the worker who is enslaved by poverty. For the sake of his wife and family, he dare not risk leaving his job in search of a better, dare not speak out his mind freely lest he be dismissed or lose his increment or promotion, dare not even combine with his fellows in a trade union for protection and help in time of trouble. How indeed can such a man be said to be free ? Or what can the much boosted democracy, for which the worker is expected to lay down his life, mean to a man who is too poor, care-worn and ignorant to think for himself, or to exercise his vote intelligently ? In the so-called democracies the State is but an executive of the exploiting class. This will be so as long as the people are too weak and helpless to assert themselves because of their poverty. Only where there is freedom from want is real democracy possible. It is only under Socialism then that these freedoms will begin to have any meaning,

(8) *Equal opportunities* :—Today, because of inequality in wealth, there is inequality all along the line. The privileged few have all the opportunities of birth, influence, health, recreation, work, leisure, education and culture, while the unprivileged many have to content themselves with the crumbs that fall from their master's table. Not so under Socialism, where inequality based on distinctions of wealth and class will disappear, and all will be regarded equally as respected workers whether their work be in the field, in the factory, or in the office. There will be no distinction of high and low, and all will have equal privileges. In this sense, all the citizens will be like members of a family. There will be differences amongst them, no doubt, in ability and attainments. But so far as the State goes, it will provide all its citizens with equal opportunies for growth and self-development. Today, a gifted boy or girl has at times to go without education for lack of money, while a perfect dunce who happens to be born of rich parents may have wealth lavished on him to no purpose. This is thoroughly uneconomic and wasteful from the point of view of the community. All such inequalities will cease, and people will have a far more

even start in life, a far more even chance of making the best of body and mind.

(9) *Leisure for all* :—Leisure, which is now available only for the privileged classes, will be enjoyed by all. For the State will seek as far as possible to reduce the hours of work of the people to the minimum, by using all its man-power on fruitful work and by adopting the latest labour-saving devices. Today, if at all improvements are effected in machinery, they are such as benefit the capitalist at the cost of the worker, for they save labour costs, i. e., enable the capitalist to get on with fewer workers, forcing the worker into unemployment, starvation and misery. But under Socialism the aim in introducing labour-saving devices will be to reduce work to a minimum so that the worker may have plenty of leisure for self-development. Till now man has been enslaving animals and fellowmen to work for him. Is it not much better that we apply modern knowledge to get that work done hereafter by machines ? Electricity, steam and oil are there to do the work of a thousand slaves. Why not use them to obtain all we want ? Today most of us have to spend our time in feeding and clothing ourselves. But if we employed machines for this, we shall be free from drudgery and shall have plenty of leisure to do whatever we please. Not only labourers but also intellectuals—lawyers, professors, teachers, doctors and Government officials—are concerned today primarily with earning a livelihood. The problem of being is for them more fundamental than that of well-being. If they could be assured of maintenance, they would much more readily occupy themselves with other things which interest them more. What advance then may we not expect in every sphere of human activity ?

(10) *Worker cared for* :—Further, as the chief concern of Socialism is the worker, it will adopt such improvements in technique as will enable him to do his work in comfort and with ease. Every effort will be made to remove drudgery and fatigue, and to make work as pleasant as possible, even if it proves expensive to the State. Today, if the worker is incapacitated or falls ill, he is worried as he cannot afford the medicines or the food required, and soon his wages or salary

will stop. Under Socialism, on the other hand, the worker will receive careful medical aid, and all that he and his family require till he is medically certified to be fit to resume work.

(*11*) *Facilities provided for self-development* :—These are not by any means the only benefits which we may expect from the socialist state. As all the wealth produced by scientific organisation and technique will then belong to the people, many facilities at present open only to the rich can be procured for all—holidays in health resorts, play-grounds, parks, amusements, schools, colleges, art schools, engineering and technical institutes, research institutions, libraries, museums, decent houses and a variety of comforts and conveniences in the home.

(*12*) *Crime and conflict lessened* :—Moreover, as there will be no exploiting class, there will be no class hatred or strife between man and man. As a great deal of crime today is due to private property, to protect which, or to lay hands on which, man does at times what is prohibited by law, crime will decrease under Socialism as, in the first place, private property will have been abolished, and in the second place, all the needs of the people will be adequately met by the State. Further, when countries cease to be capitalistic, they will not any more be imperialistic or exploit weaker peoples; for not being interested in profit, they will be content to produce merely to meet their own requirements. Thus all incentive for war will be removed, and nations will live in peace with each other.

The blessings which Socialism may be expected to bring in its train are therefore many, and it will not do for us to minimise them. At the same time, we cannot accept its conclusions blindly. We shall have to examine them to see if these things can indeed be.

## 5. The Case against Socialism :

### (*A*) *The Assumptions of the Socialist* :

(*1*) *Human well-being to be the aim of the economic system*:—

In the last analysis, the socialist's sole argument for Socialism is that nothing other than what he pleads for will lead to

the greatest happiness of the greatest number. According to him, the only merit of the economic arrangement he recommends is that it will lead to the fullest human development. It is human well-being, then, that is ultimately his criterion and the goal of all his endeavour. In this, socialists and we are on common ground. We are at one with the socialist when as against the capitalist he declares that man and his needs are the centre round which the economic system ought to revolve. It is this criterion, which, with the socialist, we must use in what follows.

(2) *Large-scale production as good :*—We have seen that Socialism seeks to get over the evils of Capitalism by abolishing private ownership of the means of production. Of the two factors involved in Capitalism, viz., large-scale production and private ownership, the socialist fixes on one, viz., private ownership, as the root cause of all the trouble. He accepts the other factor, viz., large-scale production, and retains it in his system. The socialist's assumption is that large-scale production is good. Once this assumption is granted, then all that he contends for stands. It is impossible to hug on to large-scale production and yet refuse to accept Socialism. If we must have large-scale production, it is best to entrust it to the State or to the community, for otherwise it means giving too much power into the hands of a few wealthy individuals. The capitalist countries are most certainly fighting a losing battle when they hope somehow to resist Socialism and retain Capitalism in a modified form. The logic of the movement is against them. We may whole-heartedly agree with the socialist that Capitalism is doomed and must give place to Socialism if large-scale production is to remain. The arguments of the socialist against Capitalism are incontrovertible. Besides, justice and fair-play demand that Capitalism should give place to an order where no one will be in a position which will enable him to take advantage of the poverty of his neighbour to enslave and make the latter a mere means to his own selfish ends. The wonder is not that Socialism is spreading rapidly, but that it has not spread faster. Probably what keeps most people away from it is conservatism or unwillingness to leave the old ruts, and

fear of what the new faith will bring. They would rather bear the ills they have than fly to others they know not of. But conservatism and fear cannot suffice to stem the onrush of the Time spirit. They must yield ultimately to what is reasonable and right.

If in spite of saying all this, we still raise objections to Socialism, it is not that we find fault with the socialist's reasonings against the capitalist, but that we do not find it necessary to accept the solution, which he proposes as an alternative to Capitalism, viz., large-scale production combined as it must be with centralised control. We shall examine this main plank on which he rests his theory. But before we do so, we must lay bare some of the other assumptions which control his thinking.

(3) *Abundance of material possessions as good* :—Arising as Socialism does out of Capitalism, it is unable to shake off completely the materialism of Capitalism, i. e., the idea that it is good to surround oneself with a multitude of goods. It accepts without question the idea that the more one has, the better off one is. Under Capitalism, a few enjoyed material comforts. Under Socialism, the aim is to make such comforts available for all. Historically, as Socialism arose in order to let the Have-nots have what the Haves have, the emphasis is thrown on material possessions, on having rather than on being. The question of whether such possessions are after all necessary for human well-being is never so much as raised.

Nor is it a matter that can be taken for granted, for throughout history there have been sages who have held that "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things which he possesseth." Nay, more. Some taught that material possessions tended to bind and drag the individual away from the path of self-realisation. "It is easier for a camel to enter the eye of needle," said Jesus, "than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." Possessions burden the mind with care and anxiety over matters which are of little consequence. For instance, if we can eat an orange just as well with the hand, what need is there for all the paraphernalia of a fruit dish, a fruit plate, a fruit knife, a special spoon for the purpose, a finger bowl and a serviette?

It only adds to the drudgery of washing, wiping, polishing and storing carefully. Besides, it necessitates other things like basin, knife polish, knife board, cupboard, as well as tables and chairs. Furniture fills up space. So, larger houses are needed. Then there is the job of keeping the furniture dusted, varnished and in good condition, and the house swept, clean and in good repair. That one should have plenty of good, wholesome nourishing food, and fresh air, be adequately clad, and live in clean houses, one can understand; but that we should surround ourselves with innumerable articles seems, to say the least, altogether unnecessary. They serve no practical purpose beyond that of vulgar display, and make us spend our time and thought on things that are of no real value. Our material wants must certainly be satisfied. We must have all we require to meet our primary needs in the way of food, clothing and shelter. We are not advocating asceticism. But one can live well and in comfort even with a few things. Any one who has been used to what is called a high standard of living and has later reduced his requirements to necessities knows what relief and comfort there is in getting rid of useless encumbrances. Under Capitalism, people have been lured into multiplying their material wants which have not only brought profit to the capitalist but, as we have already pointed out, enslaved the people to him. Instead of accepting such assumptions, we have to go behind them and ask if, far from contributing to human well-being, a multitude of goods does not have a way of distracting, burdening and binding the human spirit. Multiplication of goods means multiplication of wants or desires, and as desires grow with gratification, people get immersed more and more in trying to satisfy them, and have little or no time for anything else. Their life then becomes a mad hunt for goods, for manufacturing them, acquiring them, looking after them and displaying them. This craving for more and more goods, the socialist inherits from the capitalist economy, without applying to it the test of whether it is calculated to promote human well-being.

(4) *Work as evil*:—Further, the socialist attitude to work seems unhealthy and unnatural. It is again an inherit-

ance from Capitalism unquestioningly taken over by Socialism. Capitalism had made labour unpleasant and mechanical. What interest can there be in monotonously repeating the same movement day after day before a machine in a factory? The labourer therefore hated his work and wanted as little of it as possible. He looked forward to his off-time when he would be rid of his drudgery and enjoy leisure. Leisure therefore assumed for him an unhealthy attraction just in proportion as work became disagreeable. Is it surprising then that in the worker's Paradise, i. e., Socialism, leisure is what people live for, and work is regarded as a necessary evil to be finished with as quickly as possible? Let us apply our acid test and ask whether from the point of view of human development, work is an evil. In the biological world, work, i. e., activity which the bird or animal engages in to maintain and propagate life, is what appears to control every detail concerning it. Its shape, size, organs, limbs, its physical functions of seeing, hearing, smelling and such like, its instinctive fears, attractions and repulsions, and even its play while it is young, all centre round the main activities of its life—the search for food and for a mate. It is as it goes about these activities that it grows and develops. Activity is not for it anything painful to be put off as much as possible. It is a diseased, unhealthy animal that is thus inactive. Watch a child, who is nearer to nature than we who have become spoilt through dead habit and custom. In so far as it is full of life it is full of activity. It hates being told not to do this and not to do that. It never tires of repeating the same sound or movement. On the other hand, it enjoys it for the sheer fun of activity. What it hates most is bed, a symbol to it of rest and inaction. Nature evidently meant us for well nigh incessant activity. Does it not appear therefore that if we want to reduce work to the minimum, there is something radically wrong with us, and with our methods of production? By adopting large-scale machinery the capitalist sought to reduce labour to the minimum, for it saved him wages. But when the socialist wants to be done with hand labour, when there is no question for him of saving wages, does it not seem to indicate an unnatural and unwholesome attitude to physical activity?

History teaches us that when nations become easy-going and shirk work they soon come to ruin and disaster. They become soft and demoralised, unwilling to strive or put forth their best effort. They are intent on enjoyment, leaving labour to be done by slaves or colonial races. Nature seems to operate on the principle that only he who works shall enjoy with profit. But when people seek to increase enjoyment and avoid work, or reduce it to a minimum, they deteriorate. Their nature seems to lack the intellectual fibre, moral stamina and physical energy which come through battling with the problems of life. This is true also of individuals. All play and no work makes Jack a dull boy. The father works hard and piles up a fortune. He is industrious, capable, and self-disciplined. His work has made him so. But the son, who lives in the lap of luxury, knows nothing of the storm and stress of life, and grows up to be a good-for-nothing squanderer, wasting his father's substance in riotous living. There is danger therefore that in the socialist's heaven of plenty, where every one will have this world's goods to his heart's content with very little need to work for it, it will be impossible for people to rise to their highest. Pleasure and enjoyment when sought after for their own sake apart from work have often proved to be a curse.

Marx and the German philosophers—Fichte, Schelling and Hegel—were right in teaching that progress is only through conflict. Strife is the father of all things, said the Greek thinker, Heracleitus. It is only as we struggle against obstacles that all that we are capable of is drawn out of us and put into use, thus leading to our growth. This great truth of the philosophers, Marx interpreted in a restricted sense to refer merely to class conflict and the establishment of Communism. But the truth of the proposition that whether in body, mind or spirit, development takes place only through overcoming obstacles, through struggling against weakness, ignorance and inertia, cannot be denied. It is dire necessity that taxes all our resources and makes us find a solution. Therefore necessity is the mother of invention. That being so, does it not appear that in an environment where people do with as little effort as possible, there can be little hope of

progress? Not only so, in so far as there is in nature no such thing as being stationary, if there is no move forward it is apt to be a movement backward or degeneration.

But the socialist may reply that just because effort and striving are good, it is not necessary to cling to crude methods of production. If the work can be done efficiently and rapidly by large machines, why not make use of them and save people from drudgery? It is not work as such that we want to be rid of but drudgery. In answer, we may state that if drudgery is all that the socialist wants to be rid of, and not work and effort, then we can have no quarrel with him. We must agree that drudgery must be reduced as much as possible and work made easy, pleasant and agreeable. But if in order to reduce drudgery we are to resort, as the socialist does, to large-scale methods of production, it is necessary to ask what effect work in field or factory, under conditions of large-scale mechanised production, may be expected to have on the worker. For be it remembered that it is the effect on the development of human beings that we, in common with the socialist, are entitled to use as our criterion in judging the desirability or otherwise of a particular method of production.

(*B*) *The Evils of Large-Scale Production:*

It is because of accepting unquestioningly the capitalist's multiplication of human wants as good that the socialist is forced also to accept the capitalist's large-scale methods of production. The only way of meeting insatiable want is to adopt methods of production which will ensure an almost unlimited supply of goods. The two go together. If human need were restricted to a few goods which could easily be made by hand-worked machines, there would have been no need for large factories. It is artificial increase in wants that has made large-scale production a necessity of modern life. But what, it may be asked, is wrong with large-scale production? Why may we not have it if it helps us easily to satisfy our wants? One answer to this we have already given when we said that thus increasing our wants does not appear to promote human development. Let us consider the matter further.

(1) *No Development in intelligence :*— Large-scale production is centralised which means that its management and control are not in the hands of the worker. Under the old methods of cottage production, the worker was his own master. He decided for himself what he will produce and how. If he were inventive he could use his powers to improve his implements and his technique. He learnt a great deal by trying to overcome the difficulties he came across in the course of his work. He planned his work in relation to the raw materials available. He had to husband his resources. He learnt shrewdness in finding a sale for his products. There was thus scope for him to apply his intelligence at every stage of production in regard to implements, raw materials, processes, finance and marketing. Many problems thus engaged his attention—problems relating to engineering, mathematics, physics, chemistry, economics, transport, finance and commerce. He struggled with them and sought to find the best solution possible. If he failed he suffered. But that taught him a lesson and he tried again till he gradually evolved for himself the best method of working with the resources available to him. The work did not tire him, for it was varied and had many sides to it, and he went from one to the other. As against him, take the factory worker. He need never grapple with any of these problems. He works in one department of production. The machines are there; engineers and boiler inspectors look after them. Agents in the four corners of the globe see to it that there is a steady supply of raw materials to the factory. Expert chemists and technicians are employed to supervise and improve the processes at every stage. Foremen and managers look after the details of management, directors concern themselves with policy and finance, and a whole chain of middlemen and commission agents with marketing. Where in all this maze of organisation does the worker come in? What scope is there for him to exercise his intelligence in his work? The machines roll on, the articles in process of manufacture stream in before him in a ceaseless flow, one by one at regulated speed. He need never know the why or the wherefore of anything.

He need not even know what it is he is helping to produce. It may be a part—a very uninteresting part - of some huge

machine. He requires only to know that when the part comes before him he must perform some simple movement in relation to it. This he does from morning to evening, day after day, without variation. The monotony of it is soul-killing. Life is dynamic and wants change. The machine on the other hand knows no variation. Psychologists tell us that when there is no change, the mind wanders and refuses to work. Thus, for example, other things being equal, a moving object catches our attention more than an object at rest, a shooting star more than all the myriads of other stars which are apparently stationary, a moving picture more than a magic lantern show. Our own philosophers also asserted that thought is born only where there is difference, but where all is oneness thought ceases. The mind is most active when there is life and movement, but when there is nothing but one long monotony like the endless words of a dull speaker, the mind refuses to work, tends to wander and finally ceases to function, thus resulting in sleep. This being so, much less can the mind develop under such conditions. Nervous disorders result. They are said to be on the increase in industrialised countries. Under Socialism, it may be that all this can be remedied to some extent. The worker may move from one department to another, learn all the processes carried on in the factory, take an intelligent interest in the management and even be allowed a voice in it. But this, of course, is his own choice. It is no necessary part of the work allotted to him, which will go on just as well even if he knew nothing more than the one movement required of him in relation to his machine. The work then requires little or no intelligence in the worker. It of itself is incapable of educating him. Education and knowledge have to be superimposed on work, as something external to it and acquired independently of it by him who will. This itself is an admission that work under large-scale production is incapable of developing the intelligence of the worker. No work can as a matter of fact develop his intelligence unless it is of a kind that depends for its being done efficiently on whether the worker is able to tackle successfully the problems it sets to him. But if no problems are set to the worker by his stereotyped factory labour, then how

indeed can it develop his intelligence or skill? On the other hand, with improvements in technique, less and less skill or effort is required of him, so that, if anything, one may expect factory labour to lead to a gradual decline in his intelligence and physical well-being.

(3) *No Development in Artistic Sense*:—Or consider artistic sense. Is work under large-scale production capable of developing it in the worker? In cottage production, the weaver for example can try new combinations of colours and new designs. It fills him with delight to see the effect. Whether good or bad, it is his idea, it is an expression of his own conception of the beautiful. When the effect is not as he imagined it, he changes the colours or the design as he thinks suitable. He learns thus what produces a beautiful effect and what does not, and in the process his idea of the beautiful grows and develops. He acquires a sense of harmony, balance, proportion, order, system—all valuable qualities which affect his whole outlook on life and conduct, and transform him. He is not easily satisfied with his product and persists till he has given it a finish. His eyes are quick to detect flaws and his hands deft to remove them. He tastes of the joys of creation, becomes resourceful, and instead of meekly submitting to what is around him changes it to suit his ideas. His craft makes him thorough-going, disciplined and industrious, for his artistic sense will not let him rest till he has perfected his product. What valuable qualities his work develops in him! Not so with the factory hand. He produces cloth by the piece—not he really, but the machine. He is there only to see that there is no hitch anywhere, and that the work of the machine goes on unimpeded. He is not responsible for the colours or the design, nor would it do for him to interfere in any way with the pattern to produce which the machine has been set. So far as his part in the work goes, he may as well be altogether devoid of colour-vision or aesthetic sense. That being so, how can his work develop in any way his artistic sense?

(3) *No Development in Character*:— Similarly, work under large-scale production is incapable of developing the character of the worker. Character implies responsibility. It

depends on the individual exercising his choice, and his choice making a difference to things. An individual who cannot control his work according to his choice cannot develop his character through it. In large-scale production the worker is only one among many. He cannot leave his work or do it when he will, but must work when the others do. He is as it were but a part of a vast army and must move with the rest. He cannot alter the product according to his desire. In fact, he does not produce a whole article at all, but only a part of it, and perhaps a very insignificant part, and even that is produced by the thousand, all of the same size and shape as determined by the nature of the machine. He cannot work faster or slower than the speed at which the machine operates. He works to order when the button is pressed at the central office. What scope is there then in his work for choice, for initiative, for getting things done in accordance with his own desires? After all, it is self-expression that develops character. A man who has no scope for expressing his choice in his work is as good as a slave or a machine.

Let us illustrate what we mean by considering for example how the socialist hopes to develop in the worker a sense of responsibility and control. The worker, we are told, will join with his fellows in council, discuss various matters relating to the administration of the factory and have a voice thus in its running. It is over the factory council or soviet that he can exercise the greatest control, since as the circle widens into that of the town soviet, district soviet, national soviet or the Supreme Soviet, he is dealing with spheres more and more remote from himself and usually only by means of elected delegates representing him. So, taking into consideration the factory council of workers, let us ask ourselves how much in the way of training in responsibility it can afford to the workers. If there are a hundred workers in the factory there may be about twenty who trouble themselves about questions relating to administration and have views in the matter. Even of these there may be only about half a dozen who are zealous about it, hold definite views, and seek to educate and convert the others. Almost all the others, interested though they may be when the pros and cons of

various proposals are put before them, and even though they may be fully enlightened, are prepared to follow the lead of a few who generally take the initiative in these matters. The great majority of the workers therefore let their thinking and action be done for them by a few individuals. They attend the meetings and hear the views of their leaders, and give them support by vote or at the most by making speeches. They take counsel together no doubt, and their decision is a joint decision. But what matters is not the fact that they have, so far as outward form goes, thought and decided together, but that the majority of them are comparatively passive parties to the decision. Even in the best worked councils, this is inevitable. What happens is that though every one has a chance of thinking for himself, most adopt the easy course of letting their thinking be done for them. A few who already have a strong individuality develop it still further, and taste the joys of exercising power over their colleagues. But the individuality of the rest lies dormant and undeveloped. In the case of these—and most of us come under this category— nothing will develop their individuality as being thrown on their own resources. Only this will make them think for themselves and think hard. It is decisions which an individual takes thus after struggling with his problems himself that make him a fully responsible individual and develop his personality, not those which he makes jointly with numerous others. This must be fully understood, for otherwise we are apt to be deceived by words and to think that joint decisions are as good as individual decisions in developing character and personality.

One may even go further and contend that joint deliberations when undertaken by large bodies of people often pervert individual judgment instead of expressing it. For there is such a thing as the hypnotic influence over the individual of the mob. It is well-known that when alone an individual acts differently to when he is part of a mob, so much so that it may be argued that he is not responsible for what he does under mob influence. Then again in joint decisions one may take sides because of a desire to please one's friends, or out of loyalty to one's party or clique, or because

of being swayed by fine speeches, or out of respect for a dominating personality or a leader, or to curry favour with those who can confer benefits. All these make an individual act differently in joint deliberations to what he would if left to himself.

For these reasons, then, joint deliberations can hardly take the place of private decisions in regard to developing the faculties of the individual to the fullest. If so, they cannot produce in him a sense of responsibility and control which is at the basis of the development of character.

(4) *Worker Dehumanised* :—These three, viz., intelligence, artistic sense and character, are what are usually regarded as the qualities which distinguish us from the animals, and without them there can be no such thing as civilisation or culture. They are fundamental to human development and constitute the three essential elements in personality. But, as we have seen, none of them is required in factory work. And what is true of factory work is true also of all work under large-scale production, though perhaps not in such a striking degree. The result is that under large-scale production the worker becomes dehumanised. There is no other result possible. For nature has so decreed that an individual can develop only by focussing his intelli-gence, character and artistic sense on some centre of purposeful activity which evokes these qualities and cannot be performed without them. These qualities have not descended on us from the clouds but have developed in us as aids in the struggle for existence even as the tiger's tooth and claw. And as organs which we do not use decay and die, as for example our tail is dead, so also will intelligence, character and artistic sense, which distinguish us from machines and animals, be arrested in development and finally perish, if work is of such a nature as to hinder their use. In factory production this is indeed what happens. The factory hand—rightly so-called, for so far as the work he has to do goes, he need have no head—requires neither intelligence, character nor artistic sense, for these have no place in the simple movement fixed for him by the machine. He becomes thus merely a cog in the wheel, dehumanised, and more or less like the machine he operates.

If the effect on human beings is the final test of whether a particular institution is good or bad, then it would seem that large-scale production must be condemned as an evil. For while, on the one hand, large-scale production may ensure for the individual an abundance of goods, it can do so only by taking away, on the other hand, his most precious possession, viz., his personality. And as Jesus asked—"What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

(5) *The Group under large-scale production too large for development of active fellow-feeling:*—

One of the results of large-scale production is that what were originally small self-contained economic units lose their existence as such and become parts of wider and wider units. Formerly each small area may have produced for itself all the various things it needed. But under large-scale production what it requires is produced for it elsewhere, and it itself specialises in producing some article which it may not even require. Miles and miles of country are devoted to collective farming, say of wheat, and industrial centres spring up which are concerned only with the manufacture of one or other of the nation's requirements—steel, shoes, paper, textiles and what not. The result is that production takes place at some centre almost on a nation-wide scale, and goods are then distributed all over the country. The area which was formerly self-contained becomes thus tied up with several other areas to form one large economic unit, which tends to become as large as the nation itself.

But the question is whether this is the way to proceed if we would develop co-operation and fellow-feeling among the people. If, as the socialist rightly desires, we should establish an economic order where the guiding principle of production and distribution is as in a family, 'from each according to his ability and to each according to his need,' then we should see to it that the communities we establish are of a size which will make possible such attachment of members to each other that they will be willing to work and live for the group without thought for themselves. This can of course be only if the

community is more or less like a large joint-family. The larger the group the more difficult the ideal will be of attainment. Under large-scale production where the tendency is, as we saw, for small groups to become merged in larger and larger units, it would seem well nigh impossible to reach this ideal.

In reply, it may be suggested that in so far as in large-scale production, as for instance in a factory, the workers form a small group, it would be possible to develop real brotherhood and co-operation amongst them. They might eat together, live together, study together, play together and amuse themselves together. This is as a matter of fact what is actually being done in Russia. It might therefore be argued that large-scale production will not stand in the way of developing cooperation and fellow-feeling amongst the people. On the other hand, it may be expected to promote it. But if this is all the brotherliness that is aimed at, then it is obvious that there is nothing to prevent such fellow-feeling developing even under the present capitalistic order. In fact, in countries like Britain and Japan, and even in India, industrial labour is beginning more and more to combine and to have a common life of its own. But what the socialist wants is not this. He desires that the whole economic system itself should be based on the principle of family life, that is, that production and distribution should be carried on as in the family, where a member works for the others as best he can, not for the sordid motive of his own gain, but because of his love for the others, where he takes from the family not in proportion to what he contributes but in accordance with what he needs. Economic life is thus to be raised from the grossly materialistic level into which it has fallen and made essentially human and spiritual. The principle which directs it is not to be mere private gain which follows the ruthless law of supply and demand, heedless of what happens to any one else, but the welfare of one's neighbours which follows the law of love and seeks to meet another's need, cost what it may to oneself. But if the economic system is to function on this essentially human basis, mere cooperation and neighbourliness between workers in the same industry alone will not suffice. Family feeling or genuine love of others will have to exist not only

between producers among themselves, but also between producers and consumers, i. e., let us say, not only between the wheat growers of the Punjab considered by themselves, but also between them and the textile mill hands of Coimbatore, the jute growers of Bengal and the leather-workers of Cawnpore. Only then will the Punjab wheat grower produce as much as he can for the needs of his fellows in other parts of the country, and take merely what he needs in the way of goods produced by them. But it seems impossible to think of such family-feeling developing between producers and consumers separated thus by hundreds of miles. It can develop best in groups which are small, and which produce for their own requirements and consume only what they themselves produce. But in that case, large-scale production is just what should be avoided. A member of a family works hard without thought of obtaining anything exclusively for himself by his toil, because he recognises his obligations to the other members of the family and has love for them. How can such feeling of obligation and active love develop in the case of average individuals separated from each other by hundreds of miles? It can do so, it would seem, only when the group is small enough to bring them into contact with each other in everyday life; and if this group is to be self-sufficient for its requirements, as we have seen it must be if family attachment is to develop between its members, then it cannot adopt methods of large-scale production. So long as the socialist clings to large-scale production, his goal is bound to elude his grasp.

The case of Russia today where, we are told, people are working like one man with enthusiasm and zest cannot be cited to disprove our contention. Any nation,—even if it be Imperialist, Fascist or Nazi—combines under a dictator, forgetful of all domestic differences, at the time of a national crisis. But that does not suffice to prove the existence of any such active love of one's neighbour as is required if the socialist ideal is to be attained.

Further, consider whether genuine love and brotherly feeling can develop where life is controlled by huge organisations, such as will be required under Socialism to look after the production and consumption of the nation. Any organisa-

tion, if it is to function efficiently, must operate impartially according to fixed rules, the more so when it has to deal with millions of people. It must not, out of consideration for this person or that, swerve from its prescribed mode of procedure, but regard all alike. Otherwise it is bound to land itself in innumerable difficulties. It therefore tends to operate as a machine and is no respecter of persons. Hence it is that an administrative officer of an organisation, say of a hospital, a school, a law court, or a prison, may in his private capacity act in a human way, but in his official capacity he has often to adopt a stern, impersonal attitude, and to enforce rules blindly. Instead of the rules ensuring even-handed justice, as they are intended to do, they may even provide an excuse for the officer sheltering himself behind them and saying 'much as I sympathise with you, I am sorry I am helpless, as the rules do not permit me to act differently'. Moreover, when there are hundreds of patients, pupils, or prisoners involved, it is not possible even with the best intention in the world to consider each person separately as an individual with his own special problems. The result is that large organisations become soulless and mechanical. When this happens, as it is bound to happen when production and distribution relating to a whole nation are managed by a net-work of country-wide organisations, there can be little hope of engendering love and fellow-feeling among the people. For love is intensely personal, while rules and codes by which organisations have to be run are rigid and impersonal. Out of an environment where personal relations have thus to be strictly eliminated, what chance is there for love to arise? It can develop, it would seem, only where man's relation with his fellow-man is direct and personal, as it can be in small village units—not in the environment of huge organisations required for large-scale production and distribution under Socialism.

(6) *Concentration of power necessitated by large-scale production—its evils:—*

(a) *Technocracy and an all-powerful State:—*

Because of the fact that huge machines and complicated processes are used, production necessarily gets into the

hands of experts who alone are capable of running it. The economic life of the nation has thus to be directed and controlled by a few technicians and managers. Such management by experts is called Technocracy or managerial rule. The socialist gets rid of the capitalist, only to replace him by the expert who then monopolises control. "I hate privilege and monopoly," says Gandhiji. * "Whatever cannot be shared with the masses is taboo to me," and which socialist will not agree with him? Yet the socialist has perforce to depart from his ideal in this respect and submit to control of production by a few experts because of his resorting to largescale production.

Besides, large-scale production, as we have already remarked, necessitates a huge organisation for production and distribution; and since all organisation means individuals giving up their right to act, and investing with that right a few who are to exercise it for them, it leads to concentration of power. The bigger the organisation the more the power concentrated thus in the hands of a few at the top; and as large-scale production tends to expand from meeting the needs of a locality till it spreads to cover the needs of a whole nation, the organisation required by it becomes nation-wide, and under Socialism centres in the State. The State then becomes all-powerful—much more powerful than under Capitalism, where production and distribution are in private hands—, and even the power belonging to a nation in the economic sphere centres in the dictator and the few around him.

Such concentration of power is in itself an evil, as it puts in the hands of a few more power than is good even for the best of individuals. The socialist would abolish private enterprise precisely because it places the many at the mercy of a few who own the instruments of production. Under Socialism the situation is not much better, so for as this aspect of the matter goes, as under it the many are ultimately at the mercy of the ruling few who control the economic life of the nation. Private ownership which the socialist abolishes is evil, not for anything it in itself, is but because of the power it places in the hands of the owner. By abolishing it and concen-

* *Harijan*, dated 2-11-34, article entitled "Mass production is production by masses".

trating all such power, in the State, we do not necessarily free the many from the thraldom of the few. All power corrupts, and absolute power, such as is possessed by the State under Socialism, is apt to corrupt absolutely.

Nor can it be imagined that the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' with its one man rule will voluntarily wipe itself out of existence. An individual or a group of individuals who have once tasted of power will not easily part with it. What is more, the State or centralised control is absolutely essential, and cannot be got rid of, so long as the nation depends for its requirements on large-scale methods of production. For how can production and distribution when they are on a mass scale be directed and enforced except by a few? If every one is a law unto himself, no organisation, and certainly not the complicated organisation required for large-scale production and distribution, can go on even for a single day. It would appear 'therefore' that so long as the socialist adheres to large-scale methods, his ideal of a stateless society will be unattainable. The State or centralised control can gradually. wither away, as the socialist wishes, only when production and distribution are decentralised, and small self-contained communities look after their affairs themselves.

(b) *Civil Strife*:— Further, power leads to envy, faction, strife and violence, and since under Socialism those in authority will have power even over production and distribution, all the grievances of life are apt to be laid at their door by jealous rivals eager to organise opposition and seize power for themselves. The State thus becomes unstable, and is torn with civil strife. The lust for power grows by what it feeds on, and as socialist organisation from top to bottom is based on giving power over others to those who are able to obtain it, it becomes a battle-ground for power-politics.

(c) *War*:— Where such greed for power will end none can say, for leaving the boundaries of one's own country, it may, like under capitalistic imperialism, look to the four corners of the world for fresh fields to conquer. It also like Capitalism may press into its service nationalism, and plunge the world in war and bloodshed. As we have already pointed out, one of the defects in Marx's theory is that it failed to

take into consideration nationalism, which today at any rate sets one nation against another, and is a powerful weapon in the hands of the power-seeking imperialist and fascist. There is no reason why the socialist power-seeker should hesitate to use it. All power-seekers are in the end of the same brand. As under Socialism organisation will become more, rather than less, than it is today under Capitalism, it is apt to encourage even more a mad scramble for power both within the nation and outside, thus plunging the country in internal strife and war. Besides, war may be brought about by predatory states who cast longing eyes on the collected wealth of the socialist state.

(*d*) *An elaborate police and military organisation* :—

In consequence, an elaborate police and military organisation will be required under Socialism, even more than in Capitalism, (1) to preserve peace and maintain discipline within the country, (2) to frighten away or resist other military states who may be tempted to attack it for its collected wealth, and (3) to invade and take possession of weaker nations. There is no other way, it would seem, for an all-powerfull state maintaining and extending its control. In the place of love, brotherhood and co-operation on which the socialist wishes to base the economic order, the whole system has perforce to rest on arms. Consequently, the police and military become a necessary part of the administration as they must in any scheme of large-scale production and distribution, and love and co-operation a distant dream. Much of the wealth earned through large-scale production has then to be spent on armaments and weapons of destruction, and the nation made poorer thereby.

(*e*) *Suppression of human liberty* :—

Further, organisation on a huge scale, as is unavoidable under centralised methods of production, involves suppression of the individual's liberty, for organisation means giving up at least partially one's right to think and act for oneself. It means standardisation, conformity, falling in line, even if one disagreed. The less we have of organisation, therefore,

the more scope for freedom and individuality remains with the citizen. The instinct of the anarchist is right when he wants to do away with the tyranny of organisation. But, as we have pointed out, this can be no more than a dream so long as large-scale production and distribution are adopted. For centralisation means removing the liberty of individuals and concentrating power at the centre, or in the State. There is no getting away from this. Capitalism seeks to preserve freedom for the individual in spite of centralisation in production by adhering to the principle of private ownership. But as under Capitalism only a few are owners, the majority become slaves. Socialism abolishes even private ownership. and so is in an even worse plight than Capitalism to reconcile centralisation with individual freedom. Indeed, from this point of view, Socialism may be said to be only a more thorough-going form of Capitalism, i. e., a system wherein the imperfections and inconsistencies of Capitalism are removed, and there is centralisation through and through, leaving nothing to private enterprise. As business expands under the centralised methods of Capitalism, we have already seen how it tends to swallow up individual enterprises in larger and larger corporations or amalgamations, till finally it would seem that the process will end only when there are no individual enterprises left, and every industry has become a national or state enterprise. Capitalism can hardly help developing thus into Socialism, understood in this sense. This is, as a matter of fact, the tendency in highly developed capitalistic countries. So much so that it has been held that it is unnecessary to seek to establish Socialism by revolution, as Capitalism itself is inevitably moving towards socialisation of production. But what will be the result of this, when considered from the point of view of the individual? The Government of the United States of America, for example, lately threatened to take over the Railways from private hands. Why? Merely to prevent the railwaymen from striking and impeding war effort. Thus, even the last vestige of liberty to strike to have his grievances redressed is sought to be denied to the worker. Under Capitalism of the old type at least, this liberty remained with him; and

if the capitalist employer was not strong enough to resist his demands, they were conceded. But when the enterprise is taken over by the Government, strikes will not any more be possible, as they will be regarded as acts of rebellion against the State, and all the power and machinery of the Government will be used to crush the rebel. Thus with thorough-going centralisation comes the end of liberty for the worker. Nor should such a development even under Socialism seem strange. For, after all, the Marxist himself declares that methods of production are all-important in determining the life and thought of people. By retaining centralised production, therefore, even on his own theory he must expect the same effect on the masses under Socialism as under Capitalism, viz., slavery and regimentation, only to a much greater degree under Socialism, in so far as the process of centralisation is carried to its fullest extent under it.

As Capitalism took away wealth which rightly belonged to the people and accumulated it in the hands of the capitalist, Socialism takes away the power which rightly belongs to the people and concentrates it in the State. And concentration of power is not less dangerous than concentration of wealth; for men get intoxicated with power and can use it with disastrous effect against those who disagree with them. An individual who happens to disagree with those in power may well be hounded out by spies and secret police, not allowed freedom to propagate his views, and finally put out of the way by imprisonment, exile or death. If he is to preserve his freedom and have his say against those in power, the organisation which controls his activities must be, on the one hand, as small as possible, and on the other, he must be able to stand on his own legs. But when under large-scale production under Socialism, the organisation is as large as the nation itself and is consequently vested with the powers of the State, and the individual loses his economic independence in that he becomes but part of a huge army of producers engaged on a collective farm or in a factory, the organisation is too powerful for him, especially as under large-scale production he has been deprived of initiative and self-reliance. He has therefore to submit meekly or be crushed. If the organisation is not thus to

nullify the individual, the only course is to decentralise production and let it be carried on by individuals as best they can under their own direction and control. Thus only, it would seem, can the greatest freedom of the greatest number, which the socialist so ardently desires, be secured.

The socialist seeks to get over this evil inherent in centralisation by giving the individual some control over the administration. Thus, we are told, the worker will elect from among his colleagues his representatives to various offices; and since, if they fail to do according to his wishes, he has the right to recall them and put others in their place, he will have an effective voice in the administration. We must admit that in organised life this is the maximum amount of control that a citizen can have, and that under Socialism this maximum is sought to be ensured to the citizen. But we have already pointed out how little such joint deliberations and decisions really represent the will of the individual. The majority of people do not interest themselves in administrative problems, and it is but right that they should not. Normally the administration should not be the concern of everybody. It is only in an unhealthy state of affairs that people become politically minded and even so they are led by the nose by a few who are out to grab power for themselves. Therefore, however much it may be sought by joint council and action to mitigate the evils of rule by a few, there is no getting away from the fact that the many, not being qualified by capacity or attainments to run huge organisations, will have to submit for the most part to the wishes of those whom they have placed in power. Far from the State being a means whereby the individual accomplishes what he wants, it may then easily become a dead weight crushing under it those who are unfortunate enough to oppose those in power. The outward form of democracy will give the tyrant just the cloak he desires to cover up his arbitrary rule. The socialist is shrewd enough to expose the hollowness of democracy in capitalistic countries. But he fails to see that when he adopts the same form of Government, it is still liable to be abused in the same way. The man who is out for power, whether under Capitalism or under Socialism, can manipulate mass organisa-

tions for his own ends. Where then is the much talked of control of the individual over the affairs of the community?

Nor can it be thought that under Socialism the individual does not really forfeit his liberty, but that if he appears to do so when he gives up private ownership, it is only to get back his liberty multiplied a hundredfold. For example, if a man were to try to defend himself singly against an enemy he may fail, but if he joins hands with others he may succeed. If he forfeits his right to act as an individual, he does so deliberately to regain it in a much more effective manner. The flaw in this argument is that such group action, as for example in cooperative endeavour, presupposes the existence of free individuals, who only for an emergency or for a special purpose bind themselves together. But collectivisation which Socialism aims at is not cooperation. There is a world of difference between them. Collectivisation implies abolition of private enterprise, while cooperation presupposes the existence of individuals who run their own business, and cooperate or not as they please in order to further it. Cooperation is between individuals who are independent and capable of acting on their own even apart from the group, while collectivisation implies a combination where the individuals are reduced to such dependence on the group that they cannot so much as function apart from the group. The former is like the mutual aid of two individuals each with every faculty whole and unimpaired, while the latter is like the combination of an individual with legs but no eyes, e. g., a blind man, with an individual with eyes but no legs, e. g., a cripple. These latter, to reach a particular destination, can function only together, but not apart, and therefore have no real independence.

If we want to preserve the individual's liberty as something sacred, it would appear, then, that the only way is to decentralise production, and let each man stand on his own legs so far as that is possible. Democracy, or Government by the people, to be genuine requires to have its roots in the economic order. You cannot have a centralised economic order, where naturally power and control are vested in the centre and not in the people, and try to get over its evil

effects by superimposing on it the outward forms of democracy. Genuine rule by the people can take place only when the economic order is such that as far as possible each man is master of his own enterprise, for then he will be his own ruler at least for most things. Unless the economic order is such as to make self-governing individuals a possibility, self-government will be but an empty show. If men cannot be trusted with freedom and self-government in their daily work, all talk of conferring freedom and self-government on them in the larger sphere of the affairs of the nation is but moonshine.

What after all is the multitude of goods worth that Socialism makes possible, if this most precious possession of human beings—that on which all their development depends—is endangered in the case of the majority of them ? Is it not better that they have even fewer goods if only the opportunity of developing their individuality is preserved ? If we have to choose between self-development and abundance of goods, surely self-development must have our choice. Otherwise we shall have helped to bring about only well-fed, well-clothed slaves. That is certainly not a goal which can attract the socialist, who is eager to rescue the working class and the down-trodden from slavery and to liberate their powers to the fullest. True wealth, after all, is the wealth of spirit, and it is that that we must seek after, even if it means less material possessions. The kingdom of selfhood, the full possession of our powers, is surely more to be desired than the kingdom of wealth, or the possession of goods.

This is also the goal of the socialist in so far as he is also interested in promoting human well-being. Only the large-scale method of production, which he has taken over from Capitalism, makes his goal unattainable, as it involves centralisation which is incompatible with freedom and self-determination of individuals. If these are to be secured, it would seem that centralisation must give place to decentralisation, and each person must be thrown on his own resources so that he may grow and develop by managing his own enterprise, if not apart from others, at least in cooperation with them. For then he would not only be able to develop his own powers but also learn to find his good in the good of others. This is what is attempted by Villagism.

CHAPTER IV

# VILLAGISM

## 1. Introductory : Human Well-being as goal

(*A*) *Material Wealth versus Well-being :*

Our study so far has revealed that neither Capitalism nor Socialism can be expected to promote the highest well-being of the masses. The mistake of both of them is that they are primarily interested in producing the greatest amount of material wealth, the capitalist for himself, and the socialist for all the members of the community. Hence it is that both of them adopt centralised methods of production. In addition to securing for the worker an abundance of material wealth, the socialist tries hard to promote his self-development. But with what possibility or degree of success, we have just seen. You cannot, it would seem, have both. You cannot serve God and mammon. If this is so, it is obvious that if the socialist's goal of well-being for all is to be realised, it is such well-being and not mere abundance of goods that should be the basis on which we should build the economic order. Self-develop-ment at all costs, even if it means less material wealth—that should be our slogan. Otherwise we are apt to sacrifice self-development for material wealth as the socialist appears to do.

This point is so important and yet seems to be so little realised today that it is well to develop it still further especially as it constitutes the basis of the new type of economic order which we have called Villagism. The form which the idea, that the object of an economic system is to produce the greatest amount of material wealth, assumes under Capitalism is that the only consideration in regard to the efficiency or satisfactoriness of an economic arrangement is whether under its goods can be produced at the cheapest cost possible. The efficiency of a method of production is

judged accordingly not by whether it helps or hinders human development, but by whether it is capable of turning out cheap goods which can be sold at competitive prices in the open market. We have become so accustomed to regarding cheapness as the mark of efficiency that it never occurs to us to ask whether we are right in doing so. Let us see.

Is cheapness or acquisition of material wealth all that people want? Normally would people have wealth that has been stolen, or that has been obtained by murder? Who will be willing, for example, to buy a bracelet which he knows to have been torn from the arm of an innocent child who has been murdered in the process and thrown in the jungle? Wealth he would have no doubt, but not when it is so obtained. Moral considerations outweigh economic values. If the bracelet were sought to be sold to those who knew how it was obtained, there would hardly be anybody who could be tempted to buy it, however cheap it might be sold.

Or consider what weighs with us when we buy cloth. One is plain and coarse and is priced at 6 as. a yard, another fine and with beautiful design at 12 as. a yard. Do we buy the cheaper cloth just because it is cheap? Do we not often buy the more expensive even at a little sacrifice? Why? Because we care for something else besides cheapness. We want beauty, or the esteem of our neighbours.

Or take the scientist, the philosopher, and the saint, who in their passionate search after truth spurn delights and live laborious days. No amount of economic inducement will tempt them to swerve from their path. On the other hand, they are prepared to face persecution, martyrdom and death for what they believe to be true.

Or in regard to wage. Will a man give his services to any one who will pay him the highest wage, no matter what work he is called upon to do, even if it be that of a thief, a hangman, or a murderer? Or if a servant is attached to his master, will he leave him if owing to adverse circumstances, the master is unable to pay him as well as he might be paid by others? Or if the master is ill-tempered, does it not happen that no one wishes to serve him, however high a wage he may offer? Have not many in our country chosen the path of

poverty and suffering rather than serve a foreign government and earn a decent salary ?

Further, will not a father or a mother give everything in order to rescue their child from the jaws of death, and are not parents willing to spend their all on the education of their children ? Or will a man betray his friend for monetary gain, or be willing to sell the honour of his daughter, sister or wife for a price ?

No, the more you reflect on the matter, the more it is obvious that for human beings material wealth is not all. A man will feel insulted if you tell him that he cares for nothing beyond money. And yet economists have dealt with human beings as though there was no other motive in human affairs than avarice—the grim law of supply and demand working like a soulless machine determining every detail of man's economic life. Once these laws are framed by the economist, they are regarded as fixed and eternal as any law of nature ; and what is worse, men begin to believe in them and shape their economic policies in their light. What may have been but a distorted view of human nature, harmless if confined to textbooks, is unfortunately taken seriously and put into effect, and makes men behave like the monsters which economists have imagined them to be—money-making machines engaged solely in accumulating wealth, or so many pigs glutting themselves without looking beyond their snouts.

The error of the economist in this regard is an error common to all specialised sciences. Every such science abstracts a portion of reality for itself and concentrates on a study of its data excluding all else. This has undoubtedly been of much value as it has led to phenomenal success. Its danger arises however from forgetting the artificial limits one has set to one's sphere of research, and imagining that everything of consequence has been taken into account by one, and that therefore nothing else needs to be considered. Thus the economist seeks to study the laws that control the management of business. He assumes that business is business and that all other considerations, even if existent, are irrelevant to his field of study. And then he proceeds to formulate laws as though for man nothing matters besides acquisition of wealth.

But, as we have just pointed out, man is not a purely economic being. He has other interests besides—intellectual, moral, social, aesthetic and religious—, and when they come into play they often completely upset the economic motive. This being so, it is folly to dismiss them as of no importance, since as long as man is man they control his life as much as any economic motive.

Villagism starts by seeking to rectify this initial error underlying the prevailing economic schools of thought. It takes man as he is, a complex being, actuated by hopes, ideals and aspirations, and not merely dominated by desire for economic gain. And it seeks to outline an economic order which can ultimately satisfy him. Obviously such an individual cannot be content with mere economic goods. Cheapness obtained at the cost of these, which he inclines to regard as higher values, he rejects when he knows how it has been obtained. What he wants therefore is not mere material wealth or an abundance of economic goods, but wealth or the well-ness suited to a human being, or what we may call human well-being. This is what an economic organisation which aims to be adequate, permanent and abiding, must seek above all to secure. However much an economic system may succeed in bringing riches it will be unstable and prove a failure if in the process it causes human suffering, or in any way hinders people from a full life. And, conversely, even if an economic system secures only a subsistence, it will prove stable and adequate if it tends to promote the well-being of all.

Considered thus, it may even be said that an economic system which seeks the well-being of all is in the end also the cheapest for the community, as it will save expenditure on elaborate organisation and machinery for quelling disruptive forces working against its interests. We have found that under Capitalism civil strife and war were inevitable, while under Socialism they were still a possibility. So long as that is so, much of the wealth of the people is wasted on the police, the army, and weapons of defence; and not only material wealth but also human lives are sacrificed without counting the cost. In the end, then, a system in which there is less likelihood of strife and war may, even considered from the

purely economic point of view, be more satisfactory than one which in spite of producing an abundance of wealth during peace, has to expend it and more in times of internal conflict and war. Thus a system which concerns itself primarily with human well-being may be found in the end to be the one which also best conserves the material wealth of the community. The two purposes, which under Capitalism and Socialism seemed to be incompatible and to fall apart, appear here to meet and find fulfilment.

Here then is a fundamental principle on which Villagism rests—that human well-being and not mere material wealth constitutes the basis on which alone any sound and stable economic edifice can be built. Or, in Gandhian language, the sold criterion to be used in testing an economic system is non-violence. If a system leads to suppression of the individual, exploitation, or prevention of his developing to the fullest—all of which are cases of doing violence or injury to him—it stands self-condemned, however much material wealth it may bring. The goal of such an economy is spiritual, the goodness or badness of an economic method of production being tested, not by the amount of meterial wealth it brings, but by whether it promotes the greatest amount of non-violence or in other words, self-development, cooperation, unselfishness and brotherliness amongst men.

(*B*) *Ancient Indian Economic Organisation:*

In this it finds ample support from the ancient economic and social organisations surviving till today in our country in spite of the terrific onslaught they have sustained from impact with the West. The object underlying them, as we shall see, appears to be not so much the mere obtaining of wealth or material goods, as the securing of the well-being of the greatest number, or the establishment of true non-violence. The economic life of old was in a sense individualistic, since each man owned his enterprise and had to earn through it whatever he required for himself. Naturally, therefore, under such a system, the concern for human well-being or non-violence expressed itself in curbing the invidual's greed with a view to promoting the interests of the group. Various devices

were adopted for this purpose—the joint-family, cast village self-sufficiency, and barter. No doubt these institutions acquired through the ages many characteristics which were positively evil. But here we are not interested in pointing out their evil accretions, but only the germ of good which they embody, for in this element of goodness we find a basic principle on which we shall do well to rebuild our national life.

*The Joint-Family:* Take for instance the joint-family, which was a little republic in itself where all the members shared things in common, with the oldest member as the head. It afforded training in group life, where selfishness was curbed, and the individual learnt to sacrifice his own desires for the well-being of the others. Whatever was earned by a member became the property of all, so that wealth made no difference exclusively to the one earning it. It was used for the good of all alike, thus indicating that the primary purpose round which family life was built was group welfare, wealth being but a means thereto. In contrast with what happens today when with the break up of the joint-family, the individual is interested in acquiring more and more wealth for himself and feels no responsibility towards his poor relatives, the civilisation engendered of old was primarily an ethical one, not centred round greed of wealth but round the performance of one's duties to one's kinsmen. It guaranteed a subsistance to every member including the old, the infirm, the widow, the orphan, the decrepit and the maimed, thus doing away with organised charity such as prevails today, where responsibility for these is shaken on by individuals, and they are left to be dealt with in the mass by the state or by philanthropic bodies. The joint-family secured that from the cradle the individual was trained in controlling his desires in the interests of others, in protecting the weak and the helpless ; and in so far as home-life is the training ground for character, it tended to produce an individual, to whom altruism, gentleness, non-violence, and consideration for others were as second nature. Judged purely from the standards of amassing wealth for the individual, the joint-family did not enable the piling up of huge fortunes, as whatever was earned by a successful member was shared by all the others ; but judged from the standard of non-

violence or human development, the joint-family did tend to produce a refined type of individual, who had learnt to subordinate his claims to those of others, which quality of character is after all the essence of all true culture.

*Caste :* Or take a larger group than the family, viz., the caste. One of the factors which contributed to the origin and development of the caste system was economic. The work of society was at first allotted to individuals according to their inherent capacity, as we find portrayed in the Bhagavad Gita. The individuals carrying on the same occupation naturally formed a group or caste, whose function was to meet the needs of the coummunity. These groups later became rigid, exclusive and hereditary. Many as are the evils associated with the caste system in this form, it secured that the individual did no other work than what was required of him by society. It also secured that all the help obtainable from heredity and training could be made use of to make him efficient for his task. When work was determined by birth, inherited natural aptness, if such there be, was made use of, and the training given to the boy was by his own father, guardian or near relative, who might be expected to take the greatest interest in him ; and he was initiated into the secrets of his craft at an impressionable age. The primary consideration in all this was the welfare of the group, not the private gain or wishes of the individual. Greed of wealth could not make a man leave his appointed task for the community. It had to be fulfilled by him at any cost. This ensured that if a particular trade was paying at any one time, not everybody rushed to it to make as much profit for himself as possible, as happens for instance today, when with the impact of Western industrial civilisation, the Brahmin and the Kshatriya vie with the Vaisya and the Sudra for lucrative jobs, thus throwing the village economy out of joint. But each looked to the other to satisfy his needs, and in turn laboured at his prescribed occupation to meet the needs of his neighbours. The well-being of all, not the mere amassing of wealth by individuals, was the aim of the caste system.

Further, within each caste, wealth did not make any difference. The rich and the poor of a caste were alike akin.

There was a feeling of unity in the caste, transcending barriers of wealth, and recognising that one does not live unto oneself but is one's brother's keeper so far at least as his caste fellows were concerned. In the place of cut-throat competition, greed and selfishness, which for the sake of wealth make a man under an individualist economy rise against his neighbour, there was thus at the basis of the economic organisation a strong feeling of cooperation, group loyalty and mutual interdependence, contributing to the welfare of the community. The goal of such an economic order was not, as today, wealth at any cost, but non-violence, peace, happiness and well-being of all the members of the group, to which the lust for wealth of an individual had per force to submit.

This organisation was regarded as so important that the performance of one's caste duties was considered, as for instance in the Bhagavad Gita, to be the sum and substance of a man's religion and morality. Every occupation, however humble, was thus hallowed and raised from being mere humdrum routine to the level of something divine and eternal. A shoemaker was to make shoes with as much a sense of religious mission as a priest when he offers prayers for the people. Work however commonplace, not being done merely for the sake of private gain but also for the needs of the community, could be elevated to the rank of worship. The economic order was thus not separated as today from the moral and the religious under the plea of business being business, making business a matter of unjust exaction and plunder, and religion a futile code of beliefs and ritual. But religion and economic enterprise were regarded in the end as one and indivisible, for after all they were but aspects in the life of one and the same human being. The production of wealth was thus sanctified by a religious purpose to contribute to the well-being of the community.

*Self-sufficient Village Units:* A natural corollary from the distribution of work among the castes was that each village community was a self-contained economic unit, depending on itself for its primary requirements. Such self-sufficiency promoted a feeling of corporate strength, unity and self-dependence, and rested on a simple, well-knit, natural type

of mutual interdependence, where the individuals were known to each other more or less like members of a joint-family, and worked together for their mutual advantage. The relationship between man and man in such an economic order was personal, and not commercial as it is today; for the motive underlying production was not to make profits for oneself merely, or to accumulate money, but to meet each other's need. This did not make much wealth possible for individuals, as the market for goods produced was generally restricted to the people of the village. But it did ensure more or less uniform prosperity and security to all, as each man by doing his allotted task obtained what he needed for his requirements, and there was no chance of his falling, as at present, into the hands of middlemen who exploit him for their own benefit. Thus if there was no great wealth, there was no great poverty either. On the other hand, there was stability and security, everybody being assured of at least his maintenance, and everybody working together for the benefit of all in the village.

*Payment in Kind :* Moreover, payment was made in kind. That is to say, a man's need for food, clothes and such like were recognised, and the community supplied them to him, not in exact proportion to the service rendered by him but rather in accordance with his need. This gave him all he wanted for his creature comfort, and there was more or less equality in wealth between the high and the low, the capable and the incapable. A teacher or a doctor, e.g., was without wealth. But he received from his students or from his patients and others all that he needed for his maintenance, and was free from worry on that account. He was esteemed for his service to the community, and not for wealth as he is today. Wealth thus came to occupy a secondary place.

Whether then we take the organisation of old in its smallest dimension as in the family, or in the wider circle of caste, or in the still larger scale of the village, or the manner in which payment was made, we find that the desire of the individual to gain wealth was carefully curbed and always subordinated to the well-being of the group, or to the establishment of true non-violence.

(C) *Planning for the future :*

This does not mean of course that in planning for the future we should blindly revert to the past. It is not possible to revive the old conditions in which this type of organisation fitted so well and served its purpose. We shall have to rethink, in the light of conditions prevailing in the world today, what type of economic organisation we should have in our country. But when we do so, we shall do well to remember the basic principle of our ancient economic organisation, that life is more than meat, that human well-being is more important than an abundance of material goods; for, then, we shall not only be in harmony with our best cultural traditions, and thus be enabled to construct what can permanently abide with us, but we shall also be able to make our own distinctive contribution to the common good of mankind.

Nor would it do merely to copy the nations that are today glittering with pomp and gold. We may have much to learn from them, and may adopt such of their methods as may seem in the end worthwhile. But to follow them wholesale not only betrays bankruptcy of thought and imagination, but is bound to land us in the same disaster as that which is fast overtaking them. Besides, we must remember that these nations are but children of yesterday, who by virtue of certain inventions, fortuitous circumstances, and the drive and energy of new life in their veins, have achieved remarkable results in the material world. But it is for us, who are heirs to a culture as noble as it is ancient, not to be lured away by outer accomplishment, but to test it in the light of spiritual values, or, to put it in words more acceptable to the modern mind, to judge it from the point of view of its effect on human beings. For realisation of such values, leading often to renunciation of material wealth, has been the distinctive feature of our spiritual heritage. Is not, for instance, the highest caste in India that of the priest and the intellectual and not thatof the trader? And did not the king, however rich and powerful he may have been, pay homage to the wandering penniless sage who begged his food from door to door? And have we not seen from the social and economic groupings of the past that they

also were concerned with fostering social virtues, or with realising human values rather than with mere acquisition of wealth? Is it not then our duty to look upon wealth in is proper perspective, and to make it serve human ends, rather than to allow human beings to be used merely as means for producing wealth?

Further, we must remember that whatever type of economic organisation we adopt will have far reaching consequences on our national character. There are philosophers who assert that a man is what he is because of his environment. Change the environment and in that very fact you will change his character. In an environment which breeds selfishness and greed, you cannot but expect individuals to grab everything they can for themselves. Even if we do not accept this theory in the extreme, and recognise on the other hand that the environment is not everything, but that individuals are capable of rising above it and changing it, still there is no gainsaying the fact that it does play a very important part in making a man what he is. In planning for the nation, therefore, it will not do for us to take up any novel idea that comes along. Any scheme that is likely to promote selfishness, greed, hatred and violence is by that very fact self-condemned, however efficient it may be in other respects. Therefore the effect on the character of the nation, or on human beings, should be the main criterion in evaluating schemes of economic reconstruction, and material gain or prosperity only secondary, for character is destiny. It is in such concern for human well-being rather than for the mere multiplication of material goods that Villagism differs from the prevailing economic orders of our day. For it, the supreme consideration is spiritual, the establishment of a non-violent society where all—even the very meanest—will have scope for self-development.

## 2. Basic Principles of Villagism

Keeping then self-development of the individual or human well-being as our goal, we must seek to formulate the principles on which we may build our economic system. Whatever this system may or may not secure for us, it must not be said

of it that it cannot lead to human well-being or the development of even the humblest. At the same time that it leads to his development, it must lead also to the development of his neighbours. The individual and the society to which he belongs must thus find their good in each other, the individual losing himself for the good of the group, to discover that thus he has found himself, and the group seeking the good of even the least of its members, and only in this finding the justification of its existence.

If this is also the ideal of the socialist, then Villagism is nothing but Socialism—Socialism decentralised and freed from violence; for only thus, it would seem that the socialist's ideal of each for all and all for each can really be attained. It is only in small groups, as we have said, that the family tie of the individual to the group and of the group to the individual can develop, not in the huge nation-wide groups brought about through centralised large-scale production. So Villagism is no more than Socialism made realisable through decentralisation and non-violence.

The trouble with Capitalism was that it allowed full freedom to the individual to pursue his ends, nevermind what happened to others, with the result that it led to selfishness, greed and social injustice. Socialism, on the other hand, was eager to secure the good of all, but in the process, owing to its clinging to large-scale production, it tended to sacrifice the freedom of the individual for the good of the group. We err, therefore, if we seek the good of the individual apart from the group, or the good of the group apart from the individual. For this reason Villagism bases itself on the *via media* between these two extremes. And if Hegel is right in claiming that truth lies neither in the thesis nor in the antithesis, but in the synthesis which holds together within itself the partial truths of the thesis and the antithesis, then we may claim that our solution is valid. To use the language of the socialist's Dialectic, we move here from the thesis of Capitalism (uncontrolled individual freedom, unmindful of social good) and the antithesis of Socialism (complete social control, unmindful of individual freedom) to the synthesis of Villagism or individual freedom, which finds its good only in the good of

all. But of course we need not ascribe to this Dialectic any necessary development through history as the socialists do, nor regard Villagism as but a stage passing endlessly into other stages as the Hegelians do.

Further, such a solution is also what is most in harmony with our national genius. Our history bears ample testimony to the fact that our characteristic reaction to the innumerable races, religions and cultures with which we came in contact through the centuries, was not one of opposition and rejection or antithesis, but one of acceptance and assimilation or synthesis. Perhaps this synthetic outlook, which we have inherited as the result of a civilisation made mature through centuries of experience of diverse peoples and institutions, provides just the corrective needed to check the youthful follies of the inexperienced West, which inclines to swing from one extreme to another, from Capitalism with its uncontrolled individual freedom to Socialism, which is out to destroy Capitalism completely and to establish itself in its place. Villagism, on the other hand, which seeks to do justice to the soul of goodness both in Capitalism and in Socialism, thus accepting what is good in both of them, is synthetic, and therefore, from this point of view also, true to our own genius. And, what is more, this synthetic attitude, which refuses to condemn and destroy wholesale but is glad to welcome and retain after modification, is the only one consistent with non-violence. India had discovered from her experience with the several races and tribes, which lived within her borders, that the only way by which she could hold them together and prevent endless internecine feud and bloodshed, was through inculcating in them the spirit of 'live and let live', the spirit, in the last analysis, of non-violence, which unwilling to aggravate and perpetuate conflicting elements, seeks to reconcile and synthesise them. Villagism may, from this point of view, be regarded as nothing but an expression, in the economic realm, of the non-violent soul of India. It is the solution which India has to offer today out of her rich heritage to a world torn by strife and violence, and eagerly groping for a way out of the desperate situation in which it finds itself.

As for the lines along which we should proceed in order to attain the ideal which Villagism sets before itself, we obtain guidance from the principles which we found to underlie our own ancient economic organisation. We saw that in those days individuals were free to carry on their enterprise as best they could, but only within the limitations set for them by society. Neither private enterprise, it would seem, is evil in itself, nor social control. It is only when private enterprise exceeds its limits and works to the detriment of others that it is evil. Similarly, social control is not evil in itself. It is only when social control exceeds its limits and deprives the individual of initiative that it becomes evil. That being so, our solution should be one which has room in it both for private enterprise and for social control. If we would preserve the liberty of the individual, which Socialism tends to take away, and at the same time see that the interests of the community are not sacrificed, as happens under Capitalism, it would seem that that the individual should be allowed to think and plan production as best he can, though at the same time he is curbed, in the interests of the group, from misusing his liberty. This double purpose requires to be kept constantly in mind, and can be served by a two fold method, which we may call (A) Decentralisation in production, and (B) Swadeshi in consumption.

(*A*) *Decentralisation in Production :*

This means that as far as possible all enterprise should be left in the hands of individuals who carry it on, not in factories, but each under his own roof, so far as he has the capacity to run his own business. Those pursuing the same occupation may of course join together and work co-operatively. But the unit for which they produce will be strictly limited. It will be the village to which they belong, or a small group of adjacent villages, which will form a corporate whole and aim to be self-sufficient for its primary requirements. In regard to some articles, of course, the unit of self-sufficiency will vary, and may be as large as a taluka, a district or even a whole province. There need be therefore no rigidity in maintaining the principle of self-sufficiency.

Only it should be borne in mind that, as far as possible, whatever can be produced in the village for the needs of its inhabitants should be produced there, especially in respect of essential requirements like food and clothing. For the rest, the village may depend on industries run by itself in co-operation with neighbouring villages; or where this is not possible, they may be run by the State for the needs of the regions concerned.

*Decentralisation suited to Indian Conditions* :—We have already said that it will not do blindly to copy other nations. Our economic organisation must be suited to our peculiar genius, and to the special features of life in our country. A plant which thrives and blooms under certain conditions of soil and climate, may altogether wither and die when sought to be grown elsewhere. It is necessary therefore to consider our special capacity, and the conditions prevailing in our country today, before we adopt methods of production merely because they have been successful in other countries.

1. Judging from our past, our genius, or traditional mode of behaviour as a people, seems to be along lines of decentralisation. We have seen this to be true of our ancient economic organisation, where the village was the ultimate unit of production. In political life also each village was self-contained, being governed by its own Panchayat or Village Councils. Similarly, Hinduism, the religion of the vast majority of our people, has never believed in centralising faith. On the other hand, it has left the individual free to believe whatever appeals to him in regard to ultimate problems, provided his action is not anti-social. Hence it is that there has never been in Hinduism any attempt to convert people to one standardised creed, as happens for example in other great faiths like Christianity or Islam. And in worship, Hinduism is individualistic, while worship in a church or a mosque is congregational. Our music also is essentially individualistic, for it is melody pure and simple, unlike western music which is built round harmony, or the co-ordination of several divergent notes to mingle together to produce jointly an agreeable effect. It would be an interesting study to develop this theme also in regard to other fields of thought

and activity, to show that our genius formed and developed through the centuries lies in decentralisation. Not that we lacked organising power, which is necessary for centralisation, but that whatever organisation we had—for example the joint-family, caste, or self-sufficient village economy—was directed to safeguarding and protecting the average run of individuals against the activities of selfish or wicked persons. The organisation which we associate with large-scale production, on the other hand, is not of this kind, but aims at collecting large numbers of people together, not for protection but for aggression, not for guarding the weak against the strong but for making the strong stronger and more efficient.* From this, it must not be concluded that we can never develop capacity for centralisation, or the West capacity for decentralisation. Human nature is after all essentially the same the world over. Only, owing to our past traditions, decentralisation would appear to be what is best suited to us, and it is as we align ourselves with our own genius and cultural past that we can make for progress and advancement. We cannot break with our past, for it is the past that along with other factors has contributed to the present, which in its turn will flow into the future.

2. Our country is primarily agricultural; and agriculture being the occupation of the bulk of the people, they are perforce scattered throughout the country in villages. Industries must therefore be carried on as far as possible in villages and as subsidiary to agriculture, so that the idle moments of villagers can be turned to profit. Many have little or no work on the fields for a few months in the year. Factory production cannot absorb them, for they cannot leave their fields and go elsewhere, as they have often to work a part of the day in the fields. Industries have therefore to be such as they can take up or leave as convenient. This is not possible in large-scale production, where machines must work at a fixed speed for a continued period of time if they are to be profitable.

* For further elaboration of this idea, see *Why the Village Movement* by J. C. Kumarappa.

3. Capital in our villages is scarce. Therefore centralised industries which require enormous capital are altogether out of the question, if the people are to run them. Our villagers cannot spend more than a few rupees on tools and equipment. Any plan which overlooks this fact will be impracticable. Many a beautiful scheme has fallen flat precisely because the villagers cannot afford the means suggested.

4. Labour in this country is plentiful. Large-scale methods curtail labour and thus lead to unemployment. They are therefore just what we should not adopt in this country. The following table*, relating to textile manufacture in India by four methods of production, illustrates how where capital is scarce and labour is plentiful, cottage industries are best suited for adoption.

| Method of production | Capital investment per head of worker | Output per head | Ratio | Amount of labour employed per unit of capital |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Modern Mill | Rs. 1,200 | Rs. 650 | 1·9 | 1 |
| 2. Power Loom | 300 | 200 | 1·5 | 3 |
| 3. Automatic Loom | 90 | 80 | 1·1 | 15 |
| 4. Handloom | 35 | 45 | 9·8 | 25 |

If we would bring prosperity to the village it is necessary that every person in it should be profitably engaged. We have a huge population, almost 400 millions. How are we to provide them all with work, if we adopt large-scale centralised production? The total number of persons employed in large-scale establishments in India in 1939 was just a little over 2 millions, while the population increased by 50 millions between 1931 and 1941, i.e. by 5 millions every year. However rapidly we may industrialise ourselves, it would therefore seem to be beyond us even to absorb this annual increase in population, leave alone finding employment for some of the far too many people, about 300 millions, trying to eke out a living from agriculture. The only way to bring about

* *The Eastern Economist*, July 23, 1943, article entitled Cottage Industries and the Plan.

prosperity in a thickly populated country such as ours appears therefore to be to dscentralise production. Besides, what economic motive can justify a country with a huge population, dispensing with human labour and resorting to large-scale machinery ? For whether it employs this population or not it has to feed them, and if instead of employing them it uses machinery, it will have increased expenditure, for it will not only have to maintain them but also the machinery. The most economic course for such a country is first to see that none of its people is left unemployed, and only when there are not enough hands for work to be done, or the work is too difficult for them, to resort to machinery in order to supplement their labour. Otherwise such a country will be guilty of wasting the natural resources available to it.

5. Markets for our goods are limited. While on the one hand we have this enormous population, on the other hand we have practically no outside markets for our manufactured goods. For all the markets of the world for such goods are already in the possession of the highly industrialised nations who are ready to ward off all rivals at the point of the bayonet. If the bulk of our 400 millions take to factoty production under Capitalism, where shall we sell our goods ? With advance in Applied Science, very few people are required for production, so that soon there may come a time when one small country may suffice to manufacture for the needs of the world. Where then shall we go for a market ? Britain became prosperous through large-scale production because she was eminently suited for it. She had a small population, and the markets of the world were hers if only she could produce cheaply and well. This she did. With a small population and an unlimited world market, Britain achieved prosperity through large-scale production. But the situation in our country is just the reverse. We have on the one hand millions of people who do not have sufficient work to do, and on the other hand we have hardly any markets, for even our home markets are already in the possession of other nations who dump their goods on us, and sell them incredibly cheap to the detriment of our own industries. Our problem therefore is not to *save* labour, but to *provide* labour for our starving

millions. We can find labour for our people only if we turn away from large-scale factory production and take to small-scale cottage enterprise. If it is said that we may industrialise just sufficiently to meet the needs of our own people, then what is to happen to the vast numbers who will not be required for this work?

6. Our people are poor. The solution to widespread poverty does not lie in large-scale production, which under a system based on private enterprise accumulates wealth in the hands of a few, but in spreading production among as many units as possible, each of which will produce wealth for itself. Wealth will then be automatically more evenly distributed. Instead of there being a few millionaires on the one hand, and the starving millions on the other, we shall, if we replace large-scale manufacture by cottage production, have no millionaires, and what would otherwise have gone to fill their pockets will have made thousands of villagers more prosperous. The best charity towards the poor is not to distribute wealth, which is demoralising both to the one who gives and to the one who receives, but to provide work which will bring life, hope and joy in addition to feeding the starved body.

For these reasons, then, the only way to bring prosperity back to our land is to revive cottage and village industries, which will be run and managed by individuals as best they can. This is what we mean by decentralisation in production.

*The Place of Centralised Industries in Decentralised Production:*

We have already stated that not all industries of a country can be run thus on a small-scale. There will be need for centralised production in the case of (1) *key industries*, i. e., industries which provide the machinery, fuel and raw materials for small industries. Thus, for example, if we are to have sewing machines we need factories where they can be produced. Similarly, if electricity or coal is required as fuel, it cannot be supplied by each man running his own centre of supply; and if raw materials such as chemicals are to be used, factories will be essential. Or pulp for paper-making

may be produced with the aid of power and distributed to village paper-makers. So also (2) *public utilities* like railways, telegraph, and telephone, require centralised manufacture and control. As by their very nature they cannot be undertaken by the village artisan locally, they will have to be conducted in a centralised way for the benefit of all by the State, or on a cooperative basis by the people, with no eye to profit but entirely for service of the community.

So for as all other industries go, they will be carried on on a decentralised cottage basis. In other words large-scale production will not enter into competition with decentralised cottage production. The two spheres will be kept distinct, and large-scale production undertaken only where it cannot be helped, and to aid cottage production. We have illustrated this principle with reference to key industries and public utilities. But even in regard to commodity articles like e. g. cloth or paper, which can be produced under decentralised production, centralised production may be allowed temporarily, when for instance sufficient khadi or hand-made paper to meet the requirements of the country is not yet available, or in respect of goods like newsprint, which it may not be possible to produce on a cottage basis. But it must be borne in mind that if such large-scale production is resorted to, it is only as a necessary evil, but that the ideal is to produce as far as possible on a cottage industry basis. Today, on the other hand, the position in our country is just the reverse, as it is large-scale production that is sought to be established, and cottage production merely tolerated as something which cannot be helped. There is much loose thinking in this respect even among the best of our economists and statesmen who want to industrialise the country on the one hand, and yet also speak as though they want to encourage cottage and village industries. It simply is impossible to do both, for under a competitive economy the two are essentially incompatibles, and cannot exist side by side in regard to the production of the same commodities, except temporarily when production under one of them does not suffice to meet the country's demand. We shall have to make up our minds which we shall have finally, and only then we shall know what type of

production to encourage and what merely tolerate. Already cities, or industrial centres are playing havoc with villages, for they have deprived the villages of the industries which formerly kept them prosperous. This cannot go on indefinitely. A house divided against itself cannot stand. It is necessary that cities and villages should work together, and not against each other. They cannot work harmoniously, contributing each its share to the welfare of the nation unless there is a clear idea of the relation in which centralised industries are to stand to decentralised production. Their spheres have to be defined. And if they are to be kept apart, it is best to have centralised production only where decentralised production is impossible, and to depend on decentralised production for the rest, not only because decentralised production is best suited to conditions prevailing in our country, but also because, as already argued, it is only through decentralised production that the growth and development of the individual appears to be possible.

### The place of Science and Machinery in Decentralised Production :

Till now science has concerned itself with the problems of large - scale production. But under this new economy, it will devise ways and means of aiding the cottage producer in improving his implements, processes and technique. The aim will not be as now to bring in as much wealth as possible for the machine-owner by exploiting the labour of hundreds of others, but to make the work lighter for the cottage producer. The need of the producer will be the motive behind research, and not selfishness and greed. The scientist will have even more scope than now for research under this new scheme of things, for while it is easy to invent expensive and complicated ways of improving production, it is not so easy to devise simple and inexpensive improvements such as a village producer with limited resources can adopt.

It is often thought that Villagism advocates a return to the primitive, a turning away from all that science makes possible. If it did so, it were indeed a grievous fault and grievously

shall it suffer for it. But there is no reason why it should turn away from science. There is no virtue after all in sticking to the old. On the other hand, there is every reason why we should apply our intelligence to make work lighter and life more enjoyable. As we have already said, intelligence is given to aid us in our struggle for existence, and if we refuse to use it, it will but decay and die. Science therefore must by no means be discarded. It must still remain our light and guide, teaching us new ways of tackling old problems, and making us more and more efficient in the performance of our tasks. Only its role will be different. It will not be employed to centralise production, for that as we have already seen leads to the enslavement of the worker and to the stifling of his powers. It is not science, then, to which there is objection, but to the use to which science is put today, whether under Capitalism or under Socialism. Science we shall want and more science, but science harnessed to aid the worker in decentralised production.

From this it follows that under this new economy there will be need of machinery, and more and better machinery for the matter of that, so long as it is not of such a kind as to centralise production. It is often said with an air of wisdom that if large-scale machinery appear to have led us into many evils, it is really not the fault of the machinery but the fault of man who has used them in such a way as to produce disastrous results. This is repeated from mouth to mouth these days, especially by those who have socialist leanings. But against such we must agree with Marx that methods of production, or machinery as such, have very important consequences on people. Whether large-scale machinery are used by the capitalist to make profit for himself, or they are used by the socialist state for the good of the people, the machinery cannot but have the same dehumanising effect on the worker, suppressing his intelligence, initiative and artistic sense, as we have already pointed out in our study of Socialism. It is not then merely the use to which the machine is put, but the large machine itself that is fraught with evil consequences for man. As by its very nature it centralises production, it takes away from people the opportunity to express themselves in their

work, as it deprives the worker of initiative and freedom in his work, which, as we have argued, is what makes for his growth and development. Hence it is that in Villagism the one condition that is laid down in regard to machinery is that it should not centralise production. All other machinery which will aid the cottage worker to do his work with speed, ease and comfort will be welcome.

But it may be contended that these small producers may in time expand their business till the more efficient among them is able to oust his rivals and monopolise production for himself, when we shall be faced once more with large-scale production. This is what has actually happened in the industrialised West. How shall we avoid it? The only way will be to curb the greed of such in the wider interests of the community. This can be done by enforcing what we may call the principle of Swadeshi.

(*B*) *Swadeshi in Consumption*

One of the best ways of preventing manufacture of goods without limit, then dumping them on other people upsetting economic equilibrium and producing unemployment among them, is to inculcate in people the ideal of Swadeshi, i.e. their duty to purchase goods produced by their immediate neighbours rather than goods imported from elsewhere. This means that in economic reconstruction, the aim should be to make the village, or a group of four or five villages, self-sufficient for their primary requirements, so that all the fundamental wants of the people can be adequately met by the group itself. Each unit will then be using goods produced by itself in preference to goods from outside; and so if a person wishes to increase his businees so as to supply also the needs of others than those who belong to his unit, he will find that no one else will buy his goods. Thus he will be prevented from developing into a large-scale manufacturer. If the articles produced elsewhere are more attractive than those produced locally, they will not be allowed to flood out the local product, but the local artisan will be required to improve his production to come up to the standard of the foreign

product. In this way consumers will limit themselves to, and help to improve, local production.

Such Swadeshi, or group loyalty, should not be mistaken for a narrow clannishness which swears by its own group right or wrong, and aims to advance itself against other groups. This spirit, if it prevails, will disintegrate the nation into warring elements. This is certainly a danger which must be averted by all means. We have already too many such disruptive forces to fight against, to advocate bringing one more into existence. At a time when the radio, the aeroplane and the telegraph have brought people within easy reach of each other, and the world has shrunk in space, it will be utter folly to split up ourselves and the world into fragments, each water-tight and impervious to influences from outside. True Swadeshi is not thus exclusive. What it means is conveyed by the saying 'Charity begins at home'. Our first duty is towards our immediate neighbours, and then it expands in wider and wider circles to embrace all humanity. Take, for instance, the family. A man is bound closer to the members of his family than to anyone else. It is his duty therefore to feed and clothe them rather than the duty of anyone else. In fulfilling his duty to his family, he is fulfilling his duty to society and humanity. The circles are not mutually exclusive but concentric. There is no nescessary opposition between the smaller and larger circles, and we serve the larger circles even when we serve the smaller. Swadeshi is then to be understood in the sense of fulfilling our obligation to those immediately around us. To them of course we owe more than to anyone else, and to them therefore our duty is greatest. But that does not mean that we may confine ourselves to our group and not recognise our obligations to any one else. In this respect the saying 'Charity begins at home' is helpful, for it only asserts that charity *begins* at home, not that it ends there. The relationship is not unlike a man's duty to his family as compared with his duty to society. For in no case may a man allow love of his family to become so exclusive as to seek to serve it by causing injury to society. If family obligation is right, so is Swadeshi, as here understood. And it will be as faulty to condemn Swadeshi as

disruptive of the nation and the world, as to say that family love should be condemned as it may work against the interests of the community. Any virtue can become a vice by over-doing. But that is no reason for condemning the virtue itself.

*Swadeshi suited to Indian Conditions:* Our land is eminently suited to putting into effect this principle of Swadeshi in consumption, as Swadeshi is only an expression of the spirit of Hinduism in the economic sphere—a religion which regards itself as binding only on those born within its fold, and not on others whose duty it believes is to follow their own religions, a religion which regards a man's duty to be to his own faith, to reform it if necessary rather than to run after new faiths. Our people therefore will have no difficulty in adopting this ideal of loyalty first and foremost to one's own, which has become as second nature to them in the realm of religion. Besides, group loyality and group control on which it rests have been instilled into us, as we have already seen, by social organisations such as the joint-family, caste and village unity. Home life and family attachments are perhaps stronger in our country than in the West, where with the growth of industrialism they are gradually breaking up and giving place to extreme individualism. In so far as home life is but the application in a small sphere, of the principle of Swadeshi, or loyalty first to one's nearest, the principle of Swadeshi will be readily understood and practised by our people.

*How Swadeshi may be enforced*: Self-control on the part of the consumer to restrict his consumption to articles produced in his own village will not call for more altruism on his part than he is capable of. For he himself being a producer will readily understand the wisdom of the scheme. He will see that if the goods he produces are to be consumed, his neighbour must have the wherewithal to consume them, and his neighbour cannot have the means to buy his goods if left unemployed for lack of consumers. He will thus see that in his own self-interest he should limit his consumption as far as possible to the products of his neighbour. As natural gain accrues, no great idealism will be required. The

method of bringing about the practice of this ideal is therefore through education, whereby people are taught the implications of Swadeshi and, seeing that it is ultimately in their own interests as well as in the interests of their neighbours, learn to practise it of their own free will. In the meantime the principle can be enforced (*a*) by Panchayats or village councils passing laws enjoining consumption of local products; (*b*) by their raising tariffs against imported goods; (*c*) by their refusing to allow mills or factories to be set up in areas under their jurisdiction; and (*d*) by means of social sanctions whereby the community regards an individual buying or selling articles imported from elsewhere as *grama drohin* or traitor to the village, and thus outcastes him.

## 3. The Village Economy in operation and in the making

To understand the full significance of this new economic order, let us see for ourselves what it might be like (A) economically, (B) politically, and (C) culturally, when these principles are put into effect, and how we may work for it under present conditions.

### *A. The Economic Aspect*

### 1. Village economy in operation

When production is decentralised and carried on by individuals to cater to the needs of only the immediate neighbourhood, the whole basis of the economic system will change.

(*1*) *Village Organisation*:—The ultimate economic unit will be the village or a small group of villages. They will own land in common and distribute it among those who can best till it. So long as land is in private hands, as it is at present, the owners will have to be persuaded to look upon their land as a public trust which they should administer in the interests of the village, taking for themselves only what is required for their needs, or at the most say twelve times the prevailing minimum. The State may have to step in to enforce this at the start. But later when public opinion has been formed

along these lines, it will be difficult even for the most selfish landlord to resist the organised wishes of the people, especially since under a corporate economy, the individual will not function as he does today as a self-sufficient entity seeking his own profit, regardless of the claims of his community. On the other hand, as his life in the village will be under social control, it will not be too much to get him to regard his land as a trust. Thus, under a corporate village economy, he will be told what and how much to cultivate on his land, how much of the produce he may take for himself, how much he will pay his labourers, and how much for the needs of others in the village and to the State. That being so, so far as the actual use of the land goes, it will be as though the land was owned by the village, and the landlord will function as merely one who manages it according to the wishes of the village, and therefore as a trustee. The idea of trusteeship is therefore not so impracticable as it appears under the present individualistic economy. What it would mean is that the present owners of land will be allowed to continue in possession so long as they use it for the good of community, just as for instance a trustee in law is allowed to function only so long as he administers trust property as determined by the deed of trust, and not, as he pleases, for his own private profit. Even under a highly individualistic order like Capitalism, as we have already pointed out in our study of Capitalism, business though under private ownership, is steadily coming under social control. We are discovering that after all ownership is not worth fighting about, so long as control is in the hands of society. And since such control is being brought about even under Capitalism without the shedding of a drop of blood, there is no reason to think that it will not be possible in the corporate economy of Villagism. In fact, where the whole movement in the village is towards corporateness, submission on the part of the landlord to social control may be expected to be spontaneous and voluntary. This would be a non-violent way of solving the problem of anti-social use of land by private owners. Far better this than the method of expro-

priation or confiscation whereby the landlord is turned into a bitter enemy. On the other hand, by being looked upon and held responsible as a trustee, he is placed on his honour, and is likely to function as a life-long friend and helper dedicating his talents to the service of the village.

But this, of course, is only in the period of transition. Ultimately the system of private ownership of land must go. This can be done by reasonable compensation being paid to landlords for their lands, after scrutinising their title deeds to make sure that they have justly come by their land and not through usury or defective law. When nations are willing to spend money like water in times of war, there is no reason why some crores of rupees should not be spent to reclaim the land from landlords in order to free the peasants from serfdom and exploitation. Land may also be gradually nationalised by levying heavy inheritance taxes or death duties.

All the people carrying on the same occupation will be regarded by the village as a unit. The village will look to such an occupational group and not to individuals for its needs. Consequently those pursuing the same occupation in the village will not compete with each other as at present, but will help each other in production. The intellingence and skill of the capable producer will then raise the level of intelligence and skill of the rest instead of through competition driving out of employment the incapable producer. The earnings of the occupational group will be on the basis of output. Consequently the self-interest of the group will operate to stimulate production, and the members will work to their fullest capacity. Whatever is earned by the group will be distributed equally between the members composing it, provided that each member does his share of the work honestly. Only under such a scheme can the interest of the weak and the helpless be safeguarded, and persons born incapable be prevented from suffering unjustly, as today. for weakness or incapacity which they cannot overcome and for which they are not responsible.

The occupations of the village may, to start with, be distributed in accordance with ancestral traditions, as that

will be familiar to our people, and will be taken up by them naturally and easily. Only all ideas of superiority and inferiority between the occupations should be altogether abolished. Such equality between them may be brought about by common worship, common education, common water supply, common feasts, common amusements and common village administration, where no distinction of high or low is recognised. So long as all occupations are regarded as equally honourable, no one will desire to change his occupation, and a man specially gifted with intelligence will not want to give up shoe-making, for example, in order to become a professor, as every occupation will require all the intelligence that people are capable of. It is only today under extreme specialisation that work has become of a kind as to exercise only one side of an individual, and the manual worker has deteriorated into a mere hand with no need to use his head. But there is no reason why only manual work should be done by some people and nothing but intellectual work done by others. This is good neither for the manual worker who devolops into a mere drudge, nor for the intellectual worker who becomes a mere academician. If, however, whatever work requires to be done is distributed among both alike, the intelligent amongst them will, as already said, raise the standard of intelligence and work of the others engaged in the same occupation. One of the reasons why village industries have sunk to a low level is precisely that today under a competitive economy, the more intelligent have left their occupations to the drudge to carry on as best he may. Moreover, when occupations are determined chiefly by birth, a number of people will not compete to do the same job and thus upset the economic equilibrium of the village. Besides, it is possible — although this still remains to be established—that by such ancestral occupations a natural disposition towards such work is inherited by later generations, thus making them more and more skilful. But there need be no rigidity in allotting work according to birth. If it is found to lead to more evil than good, it should be given up. Exceptional individuals, specially talented for science,

literature, art and such like, or even for a particular village occupation, can be dealt with specially, and given opportunities to specialise in accordance with their talents, and to carry on the pursuits for which they have a bent. But the life of the average man may be determined for the present in accordance with his ancestral occupation. This, however, should not be understood too literally as allowing of no exceptions, but only as a general principle applicable in the main; and so far as disagreeable occupations, like scavenging go, they should be eliminated as far as possible by adopting devices such as pit or trench latrines, which can be attended to by each household for itself.

Though, like in Capitalism, the individual and the little group to which he belongs will under such an economy be thrown on their own resources, to tackle their problems as best they may, their greed will be curbed by the fact that their machinery will be small and their market restricted to their neighbourhood, so that it will be both impossible and useless for them to produce an enormous quantity of goods, driving others into unemployment. Like under Socialism, production will not be for profit which is what has led to all the evils of Capitalism, but for use; that is, it will be directed to meet the primary needs of people rather than waste itself, as at present, on the manufacture of unnecessary articles such as ineffective tonics, fancy luxury goods, and harmful products like intoxicants, drugs and armaments. The problem of marketing which is almost insolvable for the modern producer will be easily solved, as the producer will have his own neighbourhood for his market. There will be little need therefore for middlemen, who today exploit the ignorance of the villager, swallow up the bulk of the profits, and raise the price for the consumer. Trade will be voluntary and for mutual benefit, where a locality is able to produce what some other locality cannot produce, and takes back in return what it requires but cannot produce. The villager will have knowledge and control over factors which affect his production, unlike today when he is at the mercy of international forces about which he knows nothing, and over which he has no control, and

which lead him as by chance, now to prosperity and now to depression and ruin. Thus the economic equilibrium of the village will be properly maintained. Each village will plan out its production keeping in view the requirements of its inhabitants: so that there will be no economic chaos and instability as now when production goes on irrespective of demand. Wealth will not accumulate in the hands of a few, for when production is carried on by the many, wealth will be automatically distributed amongst them. It is necessary that production and distribution should thus find natural correlation, for only then can they be carried on independently of State interference. Whatever economic system we have, it must be capable of working thus smoothly, naturally and impersonally, without the State having to step in off and on to remove friction, as happens today under Capitalism: for friction causes dislocation, suffering and loss. Wealth being under such a system more or less evenly distributed, there will be no great inequality, nor will there be any feeling of insecurity or fear of one's losing one's employment, such as makes the life of the modern labourer almost unbearable, for every member of the village will have his allotted work for the community. This freedom from want and insecurity will be the greatest freedom we can confer on the village producer. At the same time, it will not mean that a lazy man can get off with shabby work, for his occupational group will see to it that he applies himself to his task; as his shirking work will affect them just as much as it affects him, since it will lower their earnings. As all the occupational groups of the village will be bound together thus on the principle of each contributing his share to the welfare of all, there will be a feeling of corporateness and mutual dependence amongst them. The village being a small group, the villager will be able to see for himself the fruits of his labour in the increasing prosperity of himself and his neighbours. The common good being thus easily visible, it will provide him with the needed incentive for putting forth his best effort. Owing to close contact in everyday life and economic dependence on each other of the members of the village unit, mutual fellow-feeling and attachment

can develop between them. Consideration for the common good will therefore not be a mere pious platitude, but the very corner-stone of the economic edifice, curbing selfishness and greed, and directing the individual's energies to service of the community. From this point of view, Villagism may be described as a corporate economy as compared with the individualistic competitive economy of Capitalism.

How vitally different such an economic system is from the economic order under which we live today may be seen from the way it may be expected to function. We have so far described the economic aspect of Villagism in a general way. Let us now descend to details.

2. *Agriculture and Industries:*—Under a corporate economy all the requirements of the village in the way of food and raw materials will be grown in the village itself as far as possible. Let us say that the staple food of the village is rice, and the raw material necessary for clothing is cotton. Whether the soil is best suited for the cultivation of these or not, rice, dal, vegetables, fruits, oilseeds, and cotton, sufficient for the needs of the village, will be grown in it and a year's stock put aside for emergency. Where the soil is not suited for any of these, it can be made to be suited by scientific methods of manuring. When science is today teaching man to produce crops with little or no soil as in "dirtless farming," research, if directed to the needs of the village, can easily discover ways and means of making the soil yield what we require. Or, as already said, one village may exchange with another what it can produce well, for what it cannot produce but requires. As far as possible, however, this kind of exchange should not be in essential commodities, for if it is, the village will suffer great hardships if for some reason, such as interruption in communications, it is unable to obtain its supply, as happened recently in our country, when for lack of imports of Burmese rice, there was famine in Bengal and Malabar.

As compared with this, consider what happens today under a competitive economy. The needs of the village are not considered at all. But whatever crops can be best grown on the soil are grown on a large commercial scale, jute,

tobacco, cotton, groundnuts, sugar-cane, senna (medicinal herbs) and what not. These are sold or exported, and out of the money obtained, articles required by the village are imported. Let us see how this works out in practice. The rates for commercial crops are fixed in the international market. Properly speaking, the rates must be determined by the cultivator's costs of production including the cost of maintaining himself and his family in comfort. But this is not how they are decided at all under a competitive economy. They are fixed in relation to the prices at which similar produce of countries like the United States of America, Canada, Argentine or Australia are available. But these countries have adapted the latest machinery of large-scale cultivation, have enormous stretches of almost virgin soil at their disposal, and a plentiful supply of water, while he struggles with primitive implements on his too small piece of land, impoverished by centuries of continuous cultivation, and against the vagaries of the monsoon, and attacks of wild beasts and insect pests. What chance is there for him to sell to his advantage when thus the odds are all against him? Is it not criminal to throw him thus heavily weighted with insuperable obstacles into the storms of international competition, to swim if he can or to sink if he cannot? Is it any wonder that today agriculture, the main occupation of our people, is not paying, and the agriculturist is sinking into debt and poverty? To argue that agriculture must be profitable, for otherwise the cultivator would have given it up is fallacious; for if he sticks to it, it is because it is his only alternative to starvation. His growing indebtedness is irrefutable proof that agriculture does not suffice to meet his expenses. Rural debt has risen according to official figures from 45 crores in 1895, as per computation of Sir Frederick Nicholson, to 1800 crores in 1937 as per the estimate of the Agricultural Credit Department.

Of let us consider industries. Here again the odds are all against the villager, when he has to compete against the gigantic machinery of the West. We have already seen that for purposes of competition, much of the costs of

large-scale production — such as maintaining an army, navy and air force, subsidies and protective tarrifs—are paid for out of public revenue, or by the consumer, and not by the industry. But no such fairy god-mother is willing to sponsor the village producer. So he is left to fight the monster of machine manufacture, singly and unaided, with his feeble hands. The result is that cheap factory goods pour into the village from all sides and he is left without employment. The Government, Economic Commissions, Planning Committees, statesmen, politicians, business magnates, philanthropists, in fact anybody who has thought at all about our villages sings the praise of cottage industries and exhorts the villager to take to them as subsidiary to agriculture. But hardly any one seems to have asked himself whether this counsel of perfection is capable of being put into effect under a competitive economy, where factory goods are being dumped on the village right and left, and mills are being introduced even in villages to displace human labour. We are told that India must be industrialised, that is, that the country must be dotted over with factories. At the same time we are also told that we must have cottage industries if we would save the villager from starvation—little realising that it is precisely large-scale factory articles that have driven out the cottage product, and brought about the very condition we are trying to remedy. It is like asking a man, whose milch cows have all been devoured by a tiger, to bring up more cows in spite of the fact that it is proposed to let loose more tigers on his land. The cow can feed him only if the tiger is kept away. The cow belongs to the corporate economy, and the tiger to the competitive, and the two cannot be brought together without the destruction of the cow. Cottage industries belong to a corporate economy, while large-scale production under private ownership belongs to the competitive economy, and the two cannot be combined in regard to the manufacture of the same kind of articles without bringing ruin to the cottage producer. This is what most people seem to fail to understand when they think that so long as they use swadeshi mill cloth in the place of foreign cloth, they are

doing their duty by the country. Let them remember that every time they patronise such mill products, swadeshi or foreign, as compete with village industry products, they are a party to letting loose the tiger on the cow, to destroying the basis of livelihood of our people.

But, it may be suggested, individualist competitive economy is not essential to large-scale production, for it can be undertaken under the corporate economy of Socialism also. So if large-scale production is socialised or carried on by the State, why can it not be combined with cottage production ? It cannot if large-scale manufacture, carried on as a state enterprise, is to compete with cottage production in villages carried on as a private enterprise, as then the competitive principle is still there, and that suffices to upset the corporate economy of village self-sufficiency. If, on the other hand, both large-scale production and cottage production are to be carried on as state enterprises with no element of competition between them, then we are back in Socialism, and under Socialism there is no reason why there should be cottage production at all, as goods can be produced cheaper on a mass scale and distributed to the people as needed. And then it will be open to all the objections we have already raised under our study of Socialism.

Still another attempt may be made to combine large-scale production with cottage industries, and it may be asked, if conditions in our country favour cottage manufacture, why not have it as in Japan, where large-scale production is as it were broken up into its component parts and carried on in homes, and then the various parts so manufactured brought to a central place, where they are assembled together to form the finished product ? Bicycles, motor cars, watches and other machinery, which require to be produced in a centralised way, may no doubt be manufactured thus, but not goods which can be produced along decentralised lines. For, beyond the fact that in cottage production of this kind, the work is carried on in workers' cottages instead of in factories, all the evils of capitalist large-scale production remain, viz. exploitation of the worker, cut-throat competition, accumulation of wealth, over-production, lead-

ing to unemployment, forced sales, imperialism and war, for it is the capitalist who owns such enterprise, and the cottage worker is but his wage slave. Nor is it any better to adopt that method under a socialist organisation, for, as we have already pointed out, private management and control are essential to a man's self-development.

What is important, therefore, is to secure private management and control on the one hand, and on the other to be done with the competitive basis, so that production is not carried on for profit but for meeting the needs of the community. These two it seems to us can be secured only in a corporate village economy, where individuals will run their own enterprise, and produce to serve the needs of their own neighbourhood. Only in the case of industries where this is not possible will centralised production be resorted to, as already said, either co-operatively by the people, or by the State, and even then not for profit but on a service basis, i. e. for no other reason than to meet the needs of the people. Thus both large-scale production and cottage production will belong to the same non-competitive corporate order, supplementing and not competing with each other.

To return to our theme, in the corporate economic order, as villages will grow on their land whatever they need, they will grow the raw materials needed for industries, even if in some cases, as we have already said, the soil is not specially suited for them, say for example cotton. Today, on the other hand because of the competitive economy, many villages have given up growing cotton, and cultivate instead whatever commercial crops the soil is best suited for. The result is that if the villagers want to produce their own cloth, they have to import cotton from outside. And under modern conditions of railway and road transport, it becomes an uneconomic proposition for them to produce cloth out of imported cotton for which they have to pay a high price. So they prefer to sit idle and buy ready-made mill cloth. But this doubly impoverishes them, for they have not only been deprived of employment but also of whatever cash they may have saved up. If, on the other hand, under a corporate economy, they grow whatever cotton they

need for themselves, they can during their leisure spin yarn and get their cloth without paying a single pie for it, for even weaving wages can be paid in yarn. There is no question in that case of Khadi (hand-spun, hand-woven cloth) being expensive, for the people will pay for it with what they have in plenty, viz. their idle moments. Thus the old industries which have been killed under a competitive economy will come into their own, and bring life and light once more to the countryside.

*3. Result of Destruction of Village Industries owing to Competitive Economy.*

(*a*) *Undue Pressure on land:* So long as under a competitive economy, the raw materials for industries are not available in the village, and cheap factory goods flood its market, what hope is there for the village artisan? He is forced as a last resort to fall back on the land. In 1931 about 64 per cent of workers formerly employed in their traditional non-agricultural occupations had given it up for agriculture and allied pursuits.* Accordingly the number of people dependent on agriculture, which already has more people depending on it than it can support, has steadily increased. It was 61·1 per cent of the population in 1891, 71 per cent in 1911, and 73 per cent in 1931. Consequently millions of people engaged in agriculture are either superfluously employed, for the land can be cultivated even under peasant farming with but two-thirds their number, or they are underemployed, for they remain idle during months when there is no work on the fields, and owing to factory competition they have no scope for subsidiary industries.

It is sometimes argued that our chronic poverty and increasing pressure on land have been brought about by too rapid rise in our population. But our population has not increased more than that of others. The population of our country rose from 1931 to 1941 by 15·1% while the population of the world rose from 1931 to 1940 by 17%. The population of Europe increased between 1870 and 1930 by 198 millions or 64 per cent, whereas that of India increased by 88 millions or

* Based on Table XI of Census of India, 1931, Vol.I, Part II.

only 31 per cent during the same period. Besides, the density of population in our country in 1940 was only 248 persons per square mile, while it was 703 in Britain, 702 in Belgium and 639 in the Netherlands. So increase in population need not by itself produce any disastrous consequences. If it does so in our country, it is only because unlike these other countries, we have not had scope for employment in industries. On the other hand, the industrial life of our people has been crippled during the last hundred years, and is steadily declining. Even during the period 1911 to 1931, the number of workers in both large and small-scale industries has markedly declined in spite of the stimulus given to Indian industry by the last war. Thus while our population increased from 315 millions in 1911 to 353 millions in 1931, the number of persons employed in industries declined from 17.5 millions in 1911 to 15.3 millions in 1931. Over 2 million artisans were therefore left unemployed, and the population had increased by another 38 millions which also could not be absorbed in the industrial life of the country. It is thus to decline in our industrial life, brought about by the competitive economy, that we must look for the main cause of our unprecedented poverty. Having no other occupation, people have been thrown more and more on the land, which however is unable to bear this extra burden.

(*b*) *Agricultural inefficiency:* When for want of other occupations non-agricultural classes thus rush into agriculture, and owing to the poverty of the peasant land passes by sale or mortgage to moneylenders and others who care little and know even less about agriculture, naturally agricultural efficiency steadily deteriorates. Formerly due to the caste system, agricultural labour was highly specialised and standardised. But now owing to the fact that a large number of people who own the land or work on it have very little knowledge or experience of cultivation, agriculture has steadily declined in skill and quality, resulting in an unhealthy effect on the nation's economy.

(*c*) *Sub-division and Fragmentation of Holdings:* Partly owing to the inheritance laws of our people, according to

which each heir has to have an equal share in property, but partly also due to the fact that there is hardly any other means of livelihood left for the people besides that provided by land, the tendency has been to divide land into tiny pieces among one's heirs. Not only so, even these have been further split up into as many fagments as there are different soils, so that each heir may have an equal share of every type of land. The result is that the holdings per person have become so small as to make it uneconomic to cultivate them, and their being scattered over a wide area involves waste of time and labour, as the farmer and his cattle have to move from one piece of land to another. As the result of all this, the cultivator sinks further and further into poverty and debt, and he sells or mortgages his land little by little in fragments, thus making his holding smaller and smaller, so much so that today the average holding is about 3 acres, and in may places 2 acres and even less, and that scattered in tiny fragments all over the village.

(*d*) *Debt, Starvation and Famine:* We have already poin l out how during the last few decades there has been a phenomenal increase in rural debt. The farmer holds on to his small patch of land as to life, but when he cannot any further, he parts with it and becomes a landless field labourer. Under the old corporate village economy, the cultivator had certain traditional relations with the money-lender. Both were members of the same rural society, which was controlled by recognised rules of conduct, and neither party could enforce its claims against the other beyond a certain point. But with the introduction of the competitive economy, and with it the individualistic outlook on life and a purely legal relationship of contract between the two parties, the social and human bond between them disappeared, and the money-lender extracts his last pound of flesh in a court of law and deprives the farmer of his land. Growth of debt has thus meant a steady expropriation of the cultivator's lands by the money-lender. In the Punjab, for example, while the cultivators sold on an average 80,000 acres a year during the years 1866 and 1874, they sold 93,000, 160,000, 310,000 and 338,000 acres annually during the following four 5-year periods. In the Bombay

Province, between 1927 and 1937, the agriculturists lost nearly 5 million acres of land thus. * As cultivators have increasingly sold away their land, naturally the number of landless field labourers has been on the increase. Within a decade, i.e. between 1921 and 1931, the ratio of landless field labourers to 1000 ordinary cultivators rose from 291 in 1921 to 407 in 1931. † But becoming thus a wage earner does not by any means solve the agriculturist's problem, for because of an over-abundance of people like him looking for work, he obtains very low wages if he finds employment during the agricultural season, and during the rest of the year he has to fend for himself or starve.

If the agriculturist is not driven into becoming thus a landless labourer, at the most he becomes a tenant, and has to pay a high rent to his landlord, as well as heavy interest on his debt. As these swallow up much of his meagre income, he has to sell away all that he produces and live on the barest minimum. There are no reserves put by in the village to tide over years of scarcity. The result is famine. We have never had such severe famines in the past as within the last century. The railways are said to be a great blessing as they can be used to avert famine by quick transport of food to distressed areas. But, as a matter of fact, under a competitive economy, they have been the chief means of draining away the resources of the village and bringing about famines. The following are figures § provided by Mr. P. A. Wadia and Mr. K. T. Merchant to show the frequency of famines during the last century.

| Period | Number | Estimated mortality |
|---|---|---|
| 1826—1850 | 2 | 400,000 |
| 1851—1875 | 6 | 5,000,000 |
| 1876—1900 | 18 | 26,000,000 |

The authors observe, " It is true that famines after 1900 have lost their old rigour, that famines of the old type in which millions died of starvation have ceased to work out their disastrous consequences...But there is scarcely a year in

* Sir. Manilal B. Nanavathi and Anjaria : *The Indian Rural Problem*, 1944 : p. 45.

† Census Report Vol. I, Part I. 1931, p. 228.

§ *Our Economic Problem*, 1943, p. 54.

which scarcity conditions do not occur in some parts of the country; and such severe droughts as do occur from time to time are followed by outbreaks of disease due to unwholesome and insufficient food."

(e) *Disease:* If there is no widespread famine there is under-nourishment exposing people to ravages of disease which carry away millions of lives. Between 1901 and 1921 about 12 million people died of plague,* during the influenza epidemic of 1918 to 1919 about 14 million,† and between 1901 and 1921 over 18 million through malaria, a disease which Europe has been able to shake off during the last 50 years by the aid of preventive measures.§ Col. Sinton who was Director of the Malarial Survey of India for a number of years asserted that "there was indisputable evidence to show that about 100 million individuals suffer yearly from malaria in British India alone, and that about 25 to 75 million more suffer from an indirect morbidity due to malaria,"¶ a disease which even more than killing people saps their vitality and weakens them. The annual report of the Public Health Commission for 1938 states that in that year, nearly 96.4% of deaths due to malaria took place in rural areas.$ In addition to plague, influenza, and malaria there are of course tuberculosis, cholera, typhoid, dysentry and diarrhoea, which arise from poverty and consequent insanitation and malnutrition, and carry off vast numbers of the people.

The death rate and longevity in india as compared with those of U. S. A. and Britain are as follows :—

Death Rate Per 1000

| | Infantile | Maternal | General | Mean Expectation of life |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| U. S. A. | 54 | 8·5 | 11·2 | 62 |
| Britain | 58 | 4·0 | 12·4 | 63 |
| India | 162 | 24·5 | 33·0 | 27 |

* *Opus Cit.* p. 54.

† Estimate by Messrs. Russell and Raja, quoted by R. Mukherjee in *Food Planning for 400 million*, 1938, p. 37.

§ Ranadive—*Population Problem of India*, 1930, p. 100.

¶ Wadia and Merchant—*Our Economic Problem*, 1943; p. 56.

$ Annual Report of the Public Health Commissioner for 1938, p. 43.

The villager thus sinks from poverty, to debt, famine, disease and early death. The process cannot stop till the competitive economy is got rid of root and branch. No doubt many other factors, such as deterioration of soils owing to erosion and inadequate manuring, unsatisfactory system of rotation of crops, poor livestock and other equipment, lack of credit and marketing facilities, oppressive land revenue, an outmoded system of land tenure and tenancy, and in general the apathy of a foreign Government to the welfare of the people, and its ignorance regarding the virtues of indigenous institutions, have contributed to this terrible state of affairs. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that of them all what has been most potent in ruining our villages is the competitive economy which has been thrust on them in the interests of British trade, for it is this economy which is responsible alike for the callousness of the Government and for the feeling of helplessness and despair among the people, both of which in the end account for the other factors we have enumerated above as contributing to the deplorable situation in our villages.

You may fill the country with agricultural colleges, land-mortgage banks, agricultural experts, marketing officers, cottage industry emporiums, research institutes, co-operative activities of various kinds, model farms, stud bulls, and the like. None of them will help beyond scratching the surface of the problem, which at its root has arisen from the corporate village economy of India being mercilessly exposed to the storm and stress of international competition, both in regard to its agriculture and its industries.* Unless we turn resolutely away from the competitive economy which has well nigh brought our people to ruin and desolation, our future is too terrible to contemplate. Something radical requires to be done almost immediately to save them from the morass in which they are fast sinking. What better plan than to tell them not to bother themselves about the international market, but to produce as before primarily for their own requirements, and to consume only what is produced by their own immediate neighbours ? Only thus it would seem, will pros-

* This has been particularly stressed in *The Economic Problem of India* by T. N. Ramaswamy, 1942).

perity and economic stability return once more to our villages and to our country.

*4. Cattle:*

In such an economic order consisting of innumerable villages engaged in production chiefly for their own use, it is obvious that we shall have to depend primarily on the bullock for motive power. Mechanised agriculture will be possible only when there are hundreds of acres of land to be cultivated at a stretch; but where we have only the land around the village for cultivation, and even that has to be distributed between various kinds of crops, bullock power will be what is most feasible. Besides, all the good that canbe expected from mechanisation is not that it will make the land yield more, but only that it will save labour. And so far as saving labour goes, it is not a problem in our country, where the difficulty rather is to provide work for our millions. By mechanised agriculture even those who are now making a living from the land will be thrown out of employment, and thus add to the poverty and misery in the country, for we cannot possibly absorb all of them in industries. Further, mechanisation involves fuel, of which we do not have an abundant supply in our country.

Besides, many of our people being vegetarians, whether for religious or cultural reasons, milk and milk products are necessary to supplement the deficiencies of an exclusively vegetarian diet. Being thus dependent on the cow, we cannot avoid the bullock coming into existence. And since our culture prevents us from killing animals for food, we shall have to put the bullock to use in agriculture and industries as far as possible, and for transport.

If the bullock is then to serve in the village economy, it will not do for us merely to concentrate on producing cows of high milk yielding capacity. We shall have to consider whether such cows can produce bullocks which are capable of doing hard work in a tropical climate, live on fodder capable of being grown locally, and resist diseases prevalent in the country. The reason that he-buffaloes are not much in use in our country is precisely that they are not able to bear the heat. So far as the question is merely one of production of

milk rich in fat content, perhaps the buffalo is to be preferred to the cow for its milk is richer and contains more fat. But the he-buffalo is practically useless for hard work. So the offspring of the cow is preferred.

Other reasons which may be given for preferring the cow to the buffalo are (a) that cow's milk is, as is also generally believed from experience, more conducive to health than buffalo's as it has more vitamin B, and has in addition vitamin E which is absent in buffalo milk, (b) that the carotene-vitamin A value of cow's ghee is ten times as high as that of buffalo ghee (Majumdar), (c) that the cow is less liable to disease than the buffalo, and therefore does not require so much looking after, (d) that it matures a year earlier, (e) that its dry period, i. e. the time from when it ceases to give milk to the time it calves again, is three times shorter than that of the buffalo, (f) that its milk yield is not affected adversely by heat and cold as the buffalo's, (g) that the cow does not require so much grazing ground, feeding and water as the buffalo.

Besides milk and labour, cattle yield dung and urine which are invaluable for enriching the soil. Artificial fertilisers like chemicals cannot take the place of such natural organic manures. It has been found that chemicals stimulate the soil to producing much for the time being, but that they have the effect of leaving it in the end exhausted and impoverished. They are also said to cause disease in crops, and in animals which are fed on fodder grown on chemically manured soil. This has been the sad experience of the West.* That being so, it would be best for us to depend on cattle for manure, and to teach our people to make compost from cattle dung, urine, waste vegetable matter and human excreta, and to use such compost rather than chemicals for manuring our fields. Even if later, by improvements in methods of using artificial means, it is found that the evil effects of chemicals can be overcome, it is well for us to prefer cattle and human manure, for the simple reason that it costs the cultivator nothing beyond a little effort to produce it. Owing to lack of fuel,

* Sir Albert Howard formerly Imperial Economic Botanist to the Government of India): *An Agricultural Testament* pp. 18—20.

however, the dung is now being burnt and the soil impoverished. To prevent this happening, forest laws will have to be modified so as to allow people to collect fuel, as formerly, from neighbouring jungles, and fuel trees will have to be planted in waste areas round about the village.

Unlike machines, cattle yield not only milk and manure but also useful materials like hide, bones, horns, hair, fat, blood and flesh, when they die. In fact every part of their dead bodies can be made use of. So in the end, they are much more useful to us than machines.

For all these reasons the cow will have to be central in this village economy. Hence it is that a special institution, the Goseva Sangh, has been established to concern itself with all the problems relating to it.

Although we shall depend in villages thus primarily on cattle for motive power, there is nothing to prevent us from using electricity for irrigation and cottage industries if and when it is available, and when there is sufficient work otherwise for the bullocks in the village, and so long as by employing it there is no danger of our causing unemployment among the people. Besides, it is important to see that the source and supply of electric power are within the immediate control of the villages served.

5. *Barter :*

Further, under such a corporate economy where people are bound together in village units by common ties of obligation, money will hardly be necessary, as goods can be exchanged directly between consumer and producer as desired. Today there may be much food on the one hand, and great need for it on the other, and yet because of money economy, the man who needs the food cannot have it unless he first procures money. We have thus created a problem for ourselves by interposing this purely human device of money between food and starvation. Why not get over this artificial barrier we have set up, and make goods or labour directly capable of exchange where possible? Why should not a man who is eager to give his labour or his produce have direct access to the commodities he wants without first having to change them into money? For more often than not, when

a poor man tries to exchange his labour or his produce for money he is the loser. The capitalist owns the means of production and the articles of consumption. and the poor man must give his labour for whatever wage he is offered if, under money economy, he is to obtain food, clothes and such like. Produce, especially fruit or vegetables, are perishable, while money is not. Consequently, the man who has money has always the better of the bargain, as by refusing to pay more than a stipulated price, he can finally force the villager to part with the produce for what money he offers rather than let it rot and get nothing for it. Money thus results in unjust exchange.

So Gandhiji says, "Under my system, it is labour which is the current coin, not metal. Any person who can use his labour has that coin, has wealth. He converts his labour into cloth, he converts his labour into grain. If he wants paraffin oil, which he cannot himself produce, he uses his surplus grain for getting the oil. It is exchange of labour on free, fair and equal terms—hence it is no robbery. You may object that this is a reversion to the primitive system of barter. But is not all international trade based on the barter system?"*

To make it easy for people without money—which is what more than three-fourths of our population are—to obtain goods, Gandhiji has suggested yarn as the medium of exchange, for yarn is something which is in the capacity of everyone to produce for himself. So if a man is hungry, for example, he need do nothing more than sit and spin for two or three hours, and exchange his yarn for food. He would thus be his own mint, himself turning out the currency that will bring him what he requires. It is undoubtedly an attractive idea, but awaits experimentation and development.

Money belongs to the competitive economy of trade and commerce, against which we have been contending. Not that trade and commerce in themselves are evil, but that under conditions prevailing in our country they have meant our undoing. When money is abolished or reduced to the minimum, there will be little temptation to patronise goods not produced in the village. This will at once stimulate and give a fresh

* *Harijan*, dated 2-11-1934.

lease of life to village production. Because of money, the villager sells his goods for what they will fetch and spends his hard earned income on cheap, flimsy articles imported from abroad, which spell his ruin.

Further, under money economy, as the result of manipulation of exchange, currency and credit, or through inflation (high prices) or deflation (low prices), the producer suffers great hardships for no fault of his own. The price at which he sells his goods becomes dependent on these factors which are beyond his control. Because of these, in spite of all his efforts he remains poverty- stricken. One way of securing for him due return for his labour is to teach him not to part with his goods for money.

Money also tempts the villager to borrow beyond his capacity to repay and to get into the clutches of the money-lender, losing his wealth, his independence, his all.

Under the present regime when land revenue, debt, rent, and services have to be paid in cash, and tools, implements and commodities bought for money, the villager is forced to sell away his crops even before he can reap them, or at harvest time when the prices are the lowest, as he requires money urgently to meet his obligations. Barter would help him to conserve his wealth, instead of parting with it at disadvantage to himself.

It would also save the village producer the money which now goes to fill the pockets of middlemen. Under money economy hundreds of miles may separate the consumer from the producer, so that many middlemen have to intervene to make the transaction possible. But under barter where producer and consumer come into much closer, if not direct, contact, hardly any middlemen will be required. So instead of the profits going, as under money economy, to middlemen who get fat and prosperous, while the villager who worked day and night to produce the wealth starves, all the profits will go to make the producer prosperous.

Further, money promotes unlimited greed as in accumulating it there is no difficulty about storage, damage or depreciation as in accumulating goods. If I have six oranges and can eat only four, it is no use my saving two to be eaten a week

later, and so I shall more readily part with what I do not need. Not so with money, for even if I have use only for Rs. 4/- I hold on to the Rs. 2/- extra which may have come into my possession, thinking that I may use it later or give it to my children when I die. Money thus tends to be accumulated and to be sought after for its own sake, while barter makes a better distribution of wealth possible. Money leads to worship of wealth and thus to a false standard of values, while under barter wealth assumes only a secondary place as means to human well-being.

The corporate village order will therefore try to revert as far as possible to some form of barter, using money only where necessary, as however valuable money may be as a means of exchange, it tends to operate as an unfair medium of exchange, to lead to great accumulation of wealth for a few and consequent poverty for the many, and also has a disastrous effect on the self-sufficient village economy.

6. *Trade and Commerce:*

As already stated, commercial production will not be a primary consideration in a corporate village economy, for as far as possible the village will be self-sufficient for its chief needs. But this is not to say, of course, that the villager is never to produce except for his own village. We have already suggested that trade or mutual exchange of goods may take place between villages, between province and province, and even with other countries. It will relate to surplus products, or articles for the production of which a locality is specially favoured by geographical or other circumstances.

*a) Not in raw materials:* Trade will not be in raw materials which can be converted locally into finished goods. Today the villager produces raw materials such as oilseeds or cotton for cities and distant places. Mills and export traders buy them off on a mass scale. In return mill oil or foreign cloth flood the village. The villager is left poorer by this transaction, for in exporting raw materials on which he himself can work, he has exported employment. During normal times, India was exporting about a million tons of oilseeds per year. This means a loss of nearly Rs. 30,000,000 worth of employment every year, calculating that the village

oil-presser earns about Rs. 30/- for every ton of oilseeds he crushes. In addition, of course, he has been deprived of the opportunity of earning an income from other industries dependent on oil—such as manufacture of soaps, paints and lubricants, which are being imported from abroad. Or take cotton. Why send out raw cotton to Lancashire or Japan, and have it made into cloth and sent back to the villages, when the villagers themselves are well able to make cloth? The procedure is as absurd as if the villagers of India sent their clothes to England to be laundered. They must wash their clothes themselves, for they cannot afford the expense of sending them to England, paying for the high cost of labour there and for packing, insurance, import duty and freight. And yet our villagers are committed exactly to such a foolish procedure every time they send out from the village raw material on which they can themselves work. and get it back in the form of finished goods. It is all very well to say that Lancashire, Japan, or Ahmedabad, will produce better cloth for the villager, and save him the trouble of making it himself. Such an argument might weigh with the professional or official classes whose income is assured from other sources. But such classes are only an insignificant fraction of the population of India. The villager, on the other hand, must earn his bread by the labour of his hands. The denial to him of opportunity to work means, therefore, denial of opportunity for means of livelihood.

It may be thought, if India is best suited for agriculture, why should she not specialise in production of raw materials and leave manufacture of goods from them to small countries like England or Japan, which seem to be best suited for industries, and which are able to produce goods for us cheaper than we can? In reply we may ask, why should we assume that if we took to large-scale industries, we cannot produce as efficiently as England or Japan? Besides, we have already pointed out that in regard to agricultural produce, India cannot compete fairly with new countries like Australia or the U. S. A. Further, as a rule, the labour spent on an article nearer the consumption stage pays very much better than one which is nearer the raw material stage. Carding and spinning

pay little as compared with weaving, dyeing or printing; oil pressing pays less than manufacture of scented oils. Accordingly, agriculture does not yield a good income as compared with industries, so that a country which is purely agricultural is destined to be poor, while a manufacturing country gets fat and rich. Hence it is that nations are anxious to monopolise industries for themselves, and compel if they can other countries to produce raw materials for them. But this is thoroughly unjust. If a world order can be brought about where it is secured that agriculture pays just as well as industries, supports all our population in comfort and provides them with the amenities of civilisation just as well as industries, it may be plausible for us to confine ourselves to agriculture. And even then, there will be the difficulty of transport in times of war, when such an economic arrangement will be paralysed owing to the stoppage of export and import of goods. In any case, therefore, it would be folly for us to permit ourselves to be reduced to being a purely agricultural country. Agriculture and industries have been spoken of as the two lungs of a nation. A nation condemned to live on only one lung must die by inches.

b) *Trade in Cottage Products possible as cottage production is not uneconomic:* We have till now spoken as though cottage production cannot compete with factory manufacture. If so, it might be thought that by shutting ourselves within the four walls of a corporate economy, we shall be continuing to use methods of production which are uneconomic from the point of view of the nation. As against this, we shall be told, what will ultimately benefit the country is not to turn away from progressive ideas but to adopt the most efficient methods, so that our nation may advance and prosper. True. But we must take all relevant factors into account before we decide whether a particular method of production is efficient or not. An oil mill, for example, may be able to crush oilseeds in a much shorter time than the bullock ghani (oil-press) and extract from them the last drop of oil. And yet, even on purely economic grounds, the oil mill may not be more efficient from the point of view of the nation than the bullock

ghani, for what the oil mill saves in crushing cost and greater percentage of extraction of oil, it loses in commission to middlemen, insurance, packing, advertisement and freight—expenditure which does not exist for the village oil-man, who presses local oilseeds and sells the oil himself to the people of his village. So there is no gain accruing to the nation from employing the oil mill in the place of the bullock ghani. On the other hand, if anything the disadvantage is on the side of the oil mill, for the oil mill requires more capital than the ghani, it gives employment to less than one seventh the number of persons, it distributes less than one fourth the wealth by way of wages, and uses machinery imported from abroad instead of giving employment to the carpenter and cattle available in villages. * The oil mill therefore is uneconomic as compared with the ghani. If this conclusion is disputed on the ground that mill oil sells cheaper than ghani oil, and it cannot do so if the ghani were really a more economic method of production, it may be pointed out that the cheapness of mill oil is to be accounted for partly by the fact that the mills buy their seeds *en masse* at harvest time when the prices are lowest, unlike the village oil-man who owing to lack of capital has to buy his seeds as he needs them, and therefore at high rates, and also because the mills adulterate the oil. If the villager can be helped to obtain oilseeds at harvest rates—which can be done by co-operative purchasing and storing of seeds by the villagers themselves, or by the State buying the seeds at harvest time and storing for later use by the oil-man, or by consumers storing their own seeds and getting them crushed by the oil-man from time to time fresh as needed, and if adulteration is prohibited by law, the ghani can more than compete with the oil mill.

Besides, in our study of Capitalism and Imperialism we have seen that numerous items of expenditure are incurred by the State out of public revenue on account of large-scale industries—the empire, the army, navy, and air force, tariffs, subsidies, unemployment relief, old age pensions, housing etc.—as well as services such as research and manipulation of currency and exchange, which serve to cheapen the foreign

* *Oil Extraction*, by Jhaverbhai P. Patel, 1943, p. 7.

factory product as compared with the village made article. Consequently it is wrong to argue from the fact that the foreign made article sells cheaper than the village product, that the foreign large-scale machine is more efficient than the village hand-worked implement. Even our own mills receive the help of subsidies, protective tariffs, and research at public cost.

Moreover, as we saw in the case of the oil mills, they are at an advantage because of having large financial resources at their disposal. If finance, in the way of easy loans is available to the cottage producer, if research is directed to problems relating to village production, so that improvements are effected in cottage machinery and technical processes, and if a wide-spread organisation is established for marketing—all facilities available for the large mill—,it is quite possible that the cottage made article will not be more expensive than the mill product. Today if the factory product sells cheaper than the village made article, it does not prove that the large-scacle machine is more efficient than the cottage implement. It may only show that the factory producer enjoys various advantages over the cottage producer—advantages which, if made possible for the cottage producer, as they can well be, may make cottage production as cheap as mill production.

Further, modern methods of large-scale production employ huge machinery, for which iron, coal or mineral oil are necessary. All these are natural wealth which is limited in supply, and cannot be replaced when exhausted. From the point of view of the nation, therefore, it is necessary to use them with the utmost care, and to employ them only when no other way is open. In cottage production, on the other hand, material like wood, brick or clay, and animal or human labour are used—all of which are types of wealth such as can be reproduced from generation to generation. Coal or petroleum once burnt can never be replaced, but wood can be had by planting trees, and cattle raised as needed. From this point of view, large-scale industries eat up the capital wealth of the country and are therefore impermanent and uneconomic, while cottage industries live on revenue and, therefore, belong to a permanent economy. Consequently cottage industries are much more economic for a country in the long run than large.scale industries.

c) *Minimum Wage:* In regard to industries in which the villager engages for commercial purposes, it must be seen to it that the artisan receives at least the minimum required for subsistence. One of the least paid industries in our country is spinning which till lately secured to the spinner less than a quarter anna (one-fourth of a penny) for an hour. This cannot be tolerated. And so the All-India Spinners' Association, under the direction of Gandhiji has, in the case of commercial production of khadi, been insisting on a minimum wage based, on the one hand, on the average output of an efficient worker spinning eight hours a day, and, on the other, on what is required to feed an adult on a scientifically prescribed minimum basis. Under such a scheme the price of khadi rises of course, but not for the villager who will produce what yarn he needs for himself. The non-spinner must be prepared to pay a just price for his cloth. Practical difficulties there have been undoubtedly, but they are being surmounted, and it has been possible in many provinces to enhance the spinning wage to three times what it was formerly. It is on such concern for payment of a just wage that commercial production must be based.

## II Village economy in the making

(*A*) *Reconstruction through Private Effort:*

We may here lay down the lines along which reconstruction may proceed at present in villages, if these principles are to be put into effect. We shall confine ourselves to such methods as lie within private control and organisation, and can be effected without state power which is not in our hands today.

### (1) The Village Worker:

The first requisite for the task of village reconstruction is of course the worker. He must be capable of identifying himself with the people of the village, preferably working like them at some village occupation for his livelihood, living like them, talking their language and sharing their joys and sorrows. For unless they feel that he is one of them, they will not listen to him, as they will think that he cannot

realise their difficulties and, therefore, cannot help them. Public spirited young men and women of ability, who fulfil this requirement, may be selected and given training in production of handspun cloth and other chosen village industries like oil-pressing, paper-making, bee-keeping, agriculture, dairying and animal husbandry, basic education, methods of industrial research, book-keeping, marketing and sales, methods of co-operation, rural economics, health, hygiene and sanitation, first aid, national and religious songs, games and sports, dietetics, principles underlying the Village Movement, and implications of a non-violent society. Such training is being given at present by institutions such as the All-India Spinners' Association, the All-India Village Industries Association, the Hindustani Talimi Sangh (All-India Education Association), and the Go Seva Sangh for Dairying and Animal Husbandry.

### (2) Village Welfare :

As man is not a mere wealth-producing machine, but is a living being, anything which will promote his physical, mental and moral development will also finally aid in the work of economic reconstruction. The village reformer must therefore not isolate economic problems and neglect the human element. Indeed in this new economy, as we have already said, the human element is central and therefore the more important. The villager is today in a sorry plight. He is physically weak and falls an easy prey to disease. A man without vitality, energy or ambition cannot be an efficient producer, much less a well developed human being. He drags on a miserable existence. It is, if anything, even more important to improve him than to improve his tools and implements. Our plans for reconstruction must be human-centred rather than merely material centred. But that is not to say that the one must precede the other. All problems affecting the villager must be tackled together and immediately. His surroundings and his water-supply have to be kept clean. His diet has to be improved within the means available to him. He has lately taken to highly processed foods such as mill polished rice, white flour and sugar.

By the refining process, these articles of food are not only deprived of their nutritive and vitamin value, but they also become injurious to the human system. He has therefore to be induced to revert to the use of hand-pounded unpolished rice, whole wheat hand-ground flour, and gur (jaggery.) Education that will make him an efficient producer and an intelligent citizen will have to be provided. Moral and religious instruction must be given. In the place of drink, gambling and vice, healthy amusements and recreation should be introduced, and he and his women folk must be liberated from cramping social customs. All these have a vital part to play in economic reconstruction, and without them mere schemes for economic betterment will not accomplish much.

### (3) Economic Planning:

Before any plan of village economic reconstruction is made, one must acquire an intensive knowledge of village conditions regarding the area under cultivation, source of irrigation, size of average holding, total revenue, taxes and other duties paid, general indebtedness, rates of interest, financial resources, average income in a year, kind of crops raised and where they are marketed. In regard to existing industries it will be necessary to know from were the raw material is obtained, whether anything has to be paid for collecting it, what capital is required, how it is obtained, equipment and tools required, labour employed, markets, any subsidiary industries that may be run on waste materials and bye-products of the industry. In regard to industries that are on the verge of extinction or have become extinct, it will be necessary to discover the causes for their decline or destruction, how many were occupied in these industries and their earnings, and what are the possibilities of their revival and improvement. It is also necessary to study local consumption to see what articles are coming into the village from outside, and whether such articles connot be produced in the village on a cottage basis. This survey should not be conducted in a purely academic fashion where the interest is in merely collecting data and filing them, but must be motivated with the practical aim of seeing what can be done

to improve matters. For this a through-going study is unnecessary. During the process of investigation itself, numerous suggestions will offer themselves as to how improvements may be effected. These should be discussed with the people concerned, who will present the practical difficulties in the way. In the light of such difficulties plans must be made keeping in mind the whole economy of the village.

We have already said that economic reconstrution must proceed primarily along the lines of decentralisation in production and Swadeshi in consumption, making the village self-suficient in regard to its primary requirements. It may not be possible to attain this ideal straightaway, but we must always keep it in mind and seek to approximate to it.

Planning becomes a simple matter when it is decentralised and undertaken for small village units, each by itself.* The plan will be taken up with enthusiasm by the people of the village, when it is their own, and is not devised and enforced by some external Governmental authority who cannot be expected to know or trouble itself about the wishes of the people concerned. Nor will it require fabulous amounts of capital and machinery, as it will depend mostly on the labour of the people themselves with the resources available to them. Consequently, it can be put into operation immediately the people are prepared to launch on it. Key industries and other such necessary industries, as cannot be conducted except by the use of large-scale machinery, will have to be planned and carried on either co-operatively by a large group of villages, or by the State, purely on a service basis. For the rest, planning and reconstructing of village economic life may proced thus.

### (4) Programme of Economic Reconstruction with special reference to Village Industries:

Firstly, such people of influence in the village as are in sympathy with the ideal of village self-sufficiency may be induced to be elected, or to form themselves, into a Panchayat

* A sample plan for reconstructing a village unit is attached as an appendix to this book.

(or village executive committee) to undertake the work of reconstructing the village.

Secondly, the needs of the villagers in the way of food for themselves, fodder for their cattle, and raw materials for industries, must be determined, and cultivation of various crops allotted accordingly. This should not be difficult. One can calculate, for example, the food requirements of the village on the basis of a balanced diet. According to the Nutrition Research Laboratories, Coonoor, a well-balanced diet should contain the following amounts of food per adult man daily: Where rice is the staple diet, Rice - 10 oz : Millet - 5 oz : Milk - 8 oz : Pulses - 3 oz : Non-leafy vegetables - 6 oz : Green leafy vegetables - 2 to 4 oz : Fruit - 2 oz : Fats and oil - 2 oz. (W. R. Aykroyd). This amount in addition to requirements in the way of gur, spices and salt should be multiplied by the number of inhabitants in the village, reducing the quantites proportionately in the case of women and children, an adult woman requiring only 80% of what is required by an adult man, and a child under 12 ranging in its requirements from 40 to 70% of an adult man's dietary needs. This would give the amount of cereals, pulses, vegetables, fruits, milk, fats and oil to be produced in the village. To this must be added the requirements of cattle, and of industries, a margin of surpuls for bad harvests and unforeseen calamities, for seeds, for exchange for goods not capable of being produced or manufactured in the village, for taxes and such like.

Thirdly, in regard to industries, the requirements of the village in the way of cloth, on the basis of 30 yds. per person per year, shelter, and the like should be estimated, and production planned accordingly, The following principles should be borne in mind.

(a) It will not do to start or encourage industries which make the village producer dependent on mills or distant places for raw materials if they can be produced locally, or in the neighbourhood, by cottage methods of production. Thus, for example, it is unwise for the hand-loom weaver to depend for his yarn on mills. For any day the mill owner who now provides him with yarn may expand his business and start power looms, which will leave the hand-loom weaver without

yarn; whereas if the village weaver obtains handspun yarn from the village, his suply of yarn is assured to him. Or take soap making. If the village soap-maker is dependent on caustic soda imported from abroad, he is at sea if through war or for other reasons, this supply is stopped or becomes prohibitive in price. If, on the other hand, he displaces the foreign caustic soda by alkali obtainable locally (*sajji, pappad-khar*, or wood ash), he is no longer at the mercy of factors he cannot control.

(b) The tools and implements needed for the industry should be as far as possible such as can be made and repaired in the locality. Otherwise, not only does it involve a drain of wealth from the village for purchasing them, but it also means that the village producer becomes helpless if for some reason they cannot be had, or go out of order. Further, if they are produced in the village their manufacture will give employment to the local wood-cutter, the blacksmith, the carpenter and whoever else may be required to make them.

(c) The capital required for equipment and raw materials must be low, as our villagers do not have capital. What they are rich in is labour. So industries which require little capital, such as spinning, bee-keeping, gur-making, oil-pressing and other village industries, may be taken up with advantage.

(d) Nor should the industries be such as need much skill. That is, they should not be so complicated that they require a long period of training, for it is necessary to get as many people as possible to produce and earn quickly.

(e) Primarily only such goods as can find a local market should be produced. That is, the industries chosen must be chiefly such as meet the requirements of the village itself. Philanthropic minded foreigners in India, eager to improve the economic lot of the people, have often made the mistake of introducing new industries like furniture-making, for which there is no demand among the people themselves. The result is that the industry, not being indigenous, does not call out the originality of the worker. He learns to make things only according to given design, sometimes not even knowing for what use the article is intended. The market is found for the article elsewhere. Thus instead

of the worker becoming self-reliant through such industries, he becomes wholly dependent both for ideas and for markets on others. Not only is the industry precarious as it depends on external agencies beyond his control, but it is also essentially wrong in principle as it does not conduce to making the worker free and self-reliant. Where, on the other hand, an industry aims to meet a demand in the village itself, the worker can use all his ingenuity in adequately meeting that demand, as it is known to him, and the market is readily available.

So also it will not do for the village producer to seek to cater to demand from mills or from abroad. Sugar-cane and oilseeds cultivation provide telling illustrations of this truth, as lately owing to over-production, sugar mills were unable to consume sugar-cane which, therefore, had to rot in the fields, and owing to war many of our markets abroad for oil-seeds were closed, thus leading those who produced them to ruin and irreparable loss.

Further, where the consumption is not local, the village producer gets into the hands of middlemen who exploit the situation to their own benefit and leave very little income for the producer.

(f) One of the most effective ways of bringing about economic prosperity in villages is through consumption. It is often thought by those residing in towns or cities that however much they may wish to ameliorate the poverty of the people by reviving village industries, still inasmuch as they do not live in villages they can do nothing. This is altogether wrong. As consumers they have a powerful weapon wherewith to direct production. If city-dwellers and others piously wishing for village reconstruction, continue to patronise factory products, it cannot but give a death-blow to village industries. If, on the other hand, they determine at all costs to buy village products in preference to factory goods, village production will at once be stimulated. It will not do to reply that village industry articles are so poor in quality that until they are improved, no one can be expected to buy them, for obviously they cannot improve unless they are in demand. It is because they have not been

patronised that they have deteriorated in quality. Our craftsmen still have the patience, industry and skill of old, which won for their products universal admiration. It lies with us, the consumers, therefore, to see that this excellence in quality is once more revived. It is time that we realised that only as we consume village products that village production can improve. Nor must we think of the extra price that we may have to pay for the village product. What profit is there if an individual saves a few rupees if the masses are thereby impoverished? For ultimately, when the masses are poor it will inevitably recoil on the well-to-do consumer himself. It is time we learnt that we stand together or fall together.

**(5) Co-operation:**

Much is heard about the co-operative movement in parts of Europe and lately in China. But the self-sufficient village is itself nothing but a form of co-operative endeavour. It is co-operation, not only between those who pursue a common trade but between all who live together in the village. It is a higher form of co-operation than the former in that it extends to people of all occupations and holds them together in a union which covers all aspects of their life. Co-operation of this type is not a mere temporary business arrangement to be entered into or ended as convenient. To-day we engage a barber or a washerman, and if we are dissatisfied with him we get rid of him and feel no further responsibility towards him. We come together purely for mutual advantage and part no sooner than such advantage is not forthcoming. Co-operation of this kind is thus temporary and only for profit. Not so co-operation under the village economy where the people of the village will co-operate with each other for life. The village barber attends to your needs always, and you cannot replace him by any one else. When we are thus bound together permanently, our relationship to each other is not purely mercenary. It extends to other aspects of life as well. We take interest in each other, in our families, in each other's thoughts, feelings and actions, and our co-operation becomes personal and all-sided. The tie that binds us together is not just economic but human.

To work towards this end it is necessary to apply the principle of co-operation in village life wherever possible. In regard to agriculture, under present conditions when the average holding of land is only 3 acres and even that is scattered in tiny fragments all over the village, the landholders of the village should be induced to pool their land resources together and cultivate on a co-operative basis. Or at least a beginning may be made by getting people to exchange between themselves their scattered fragments in order thus to consolidate their holdings into compact blocks. So long as the present system of private holdings is retained, this appears to be the least that can be done to get over the evils of fragmentation of land. The problem of finance, irrigation and soil erosion can also best be tackled co-operatively.

In regard to industries also, we have already pointed out that all those of the village carrying on the same occupation should combine into co-operatives or trade guilds to meet the requirements of the village and share their earnings equally between themselves on the principle of equal pay for honest work.

Further, under the economy we visualise, beside co-operation of those pursuing the same occupation in one village, there will be also co-operation of people following the same trade in several adjoining villages for the better discharge of certain functions, not possible for each village trade unit by itself, e.g. use of power for pulp-manufacture for paper-making, centralised tanning for leather work, or high power kilns for firing pottery. All such co-operative work must be carried on, however, not as at present, as a department of Government, but by the people themselves. The most successful co-operative effort of this latter kind, which has spread throughout the length and breadth of our land in recent years, is of course that of the All-India Spinners' Association, which has hitherto concerned itself only with organisation of production of yarn and cloth, and its marketing. With the policy of decentralisation which it has recently adopted and its decision to tackle as far as possible every aspect of the villager's life, even from its pre-natal stage to its close, the Association may be expected to guide the village co-operatives aright.

Co-operatives of people carrying on the same occupation will deal as far as possible with all the problems connected with the occupation. Our people are too illiterate and unorganised to join different co-operative societies, each dealing with one problem only. They will not go from one agency to another looking for help and advice. It would be best therefore for one institution, viz. their occupational co-operative to deal with all their problems.

In addition to such occupational co-operatives there will be need for a central agency which will co-ordinate and guide all the co-operative groups in the village. Normally, such a central body will be, as already said, the Panchayat, which may work under the guidance of a worker of the All-India Spinners' Association, All-India Village Industries Association or the Hindustani Talimi Sangh (All-India Education Association). But where a Panchayat sufficiently enlightened for such work is not available, as will generally be the case to start with, a Village Reconstruction Committee may be set up by the worker. The aim of this committee must be, both through the co-operatives as well as through other effort, to bring about all-sided development in the village, and more especially to make the village self-sufficient for all its primary requirements, and capable of looking after all its affairs itself. It is such co-operative work among the people, which must teach them by practical demonstration the virtue of self-help, and of working and living for each other which, we have seen, is the basis of this non-violent village economy.

**(6) Education:**

For laying the foundations of this new economic order, our most important means is education, not of the narrow text-book variety, but of a kind which, while based on some suitable craft or village occupation, will relate to every aspect of the child's life—his body, mind and spirit, and his physical, social and cultural environment. It will have to be controlled by the practical object of developing his powers and making him proficient in the living of his everyday life—in his task, and in his duties to himself, his family his occupational group, his village, his district, his province, his country

and the world. Modern states, whether democratic, fascist or socialist, realise the great value of education in training future citizens, and make use of the school as a means of instilling into the minds of the young such ideas as they consider desirable. A well trained mind, a disciplined character and a skilled hand being even more necessary in the case of a non-violent order based primarily on hand labour, education aiming at producing these qualities in the young must play a fundamental part in the work of reconstruction.

Today, whether under Capitalism or under Socialism, much value is set on achievement of results. A capable individual is rewarded with money or titles not so much for his capacity or for his laborious work but for the results he has been able to achieve in the realm of art, science or industry. An equally capable person may likewise work hard, but if his efforts do not happen to lead to useful results as e. g. in science, or to results capable of being appreciated by the public, as happens often in art, he fails to gain recognition. Other things being equal, it would seem that, as a matter of fact, of the two it is the man who strives hard but fails to produce phenomenal results that needs recognition and encouragement rather than the one who even without much effort achieves success; for in the first place, in the case of the latter the results are their own reward and can be depended on to act as an incentive for further effort; and in the second place, results are often not in a man's control, while persistent effort which implies a deliberate turning away from distraction, to apply one's mind to the task in hand, requires a trained will, which is a socially valuable element in character and deserves to be fostered in individuals. Moreover, the fact that even genius has been described as an infinite capacity to take pains reveals that without perseverance and untiring effort, mere inherent capacity is of little avail. So in education, emphasis requires to be placed on cultivation of such character rather than on mere attainment of results.

So also, in education for this new economic order, high value must be placed on capacity to unite people together and make them live in peace and harmony, and the opposite of this, viz. the tendency to set people against each other even

if found in an individual, who is clever and capable, must meet with unqualified disapproval and condemnation.

Further, under a capitalist order, there is hardly any training given in social responsibility. An individual is held accountable primarily for his own acts, and he is praised or blamed accordingly. Thus he learns individual responsibility, but he fails to realise his oneness with his group, and his responsibility for it. For this purpose, methods should be evolved whereby credit or discredit for acts done or not done, does not go merely to an indivindual pupil but to the group to which he belongs, so that the individual learns to regard himself as not only responsible for himself but also for his group and all those who compose it.

Moreover, the child should be given training in group discipline, i.e. in working together with others as a team and not pulling apart as he pleases. He must learn to act organisationally. He must know to submit when he is not able to carry the group with him, and to abide by the decision of those who are placed in the position of leaders. This may be done by group games and drills, and by organising the children into teams such as boy scouts and girl guides.

Then again, in a society based on non-violence, educational methods which cause fear in a child should be scrupulously avoided, for fear is at the root of all moral weakness. Today through fear — fear of punishment, of scolding, or examinations, and of disgrace—the child is made to do things he dislikes. A non-violent society cannot afford thus to instil fear into children, as it requires its members to be fearless and strong, to be willing to face suffering, contumely and death without shrinking. Unless therefore the child is trained from the very start to be free from fear, he will be incapable of meeting the demands that will be made on him as a *satyagrahi* (non-violent resister of evil) to invite suffering on himself in order thus to convert the oppressor.

Another principle which will have to be borne in mind in education under this village economy is that the individual's outlook and loyalties are not narrow and exclusive but extend to embrace the nation and the world. The temptation in self-sufficient village groups will be for the villages to confine

themselves to their own little circles and to pursue their own welfare regardless of what happens to other groups. This is a very real danger, and unless it is deliberataly averted it will result in splitting up the country into mutually exclusive elements. It will be the responsibility of those engaged in education, through the teaching of geography, history, literature, song, art and religion, and through lectures, travel if possible, and organisation of relief to areas in distress, to instil into the minds of both young and old alike, love of country, and a feeling of cultural unity with people in the rest of the land, whatever their language, race or creed. The United States of America has been able by an intensive process of education to absorb the diverse nationalities who migrate there, and to make of them full-fledged Americans. Our task through education to keep our people united as a nation will be much easier. Further, all narrow patriotism which seeks to elevate one's own country at the cost of others, or to extol it by bringing other countries into disrepute should be condemned, and a genuine interest in, understanding of, and respect for, other nations should be inculcated in every way possible.

Besides the school, every other avenue of imparting instruction and information to children and adults should be made use of such as exhibitions, fairs, songs, *bhajans* (religious discourses accompanied by singing), lectures, books, papers, etc. Also training should be given in organisational life by forming youth leagues and men's and women's societies for sanitation, social reform, protection of the village, recreation and cultural activities. These should be strictly non-communual and open to all castes and creeds. Organisations of this kind in one village may co-operate with corresponding organisations in neighbouring villages, and a healthy competition may be set up between one village and another to see which of them accomplishes most in a fixed period of time. Today the village is full of dissentions, party factions, caste distinctions which are carried to the extent of treating some people as untouchables, tyrannical social customs, ignorance, disease and dirt. The most effective way of overcoming these evils is through the organised effort of the villagers themselves. For this however systematic educa-

tion of every individual at all times and in all places will be required—in the home, the school, the playground, the field, the workshop, the village meeting place, the theatre, and the temple, the mosque or the church. All-sided education of this kind with special emphasis on social virtues must go hand in hand with efforts at economic reconstruction, if our village life is to be revitalised and the new economic order established.

**(7) Women :**

If education and inculcation of social ideals is so important for the bringing about of this new order, women will have a fundamental part to play in the work of reconstruction. This new economic order will appeal specially to them because of its non-violent basis. Moreover, it is only in a non-violent society that women will come into their own and have full scope for exercising their special powers. For in a society based on violence, woman's role is necessarily subordinate, as she is physically weaker than man. But in a non-violent society where the controlling factor is not physical might but moral strength, woman will become the equal of man. Indeed, she may even acquire a higher position than man, in so far as woman has greater capacity for patience, suffering, sacrifice, human kindness, respect for social codes, and devotion to religion, all valuable qualities which are indispensable for life in a non-violent social order. We shall have therefore to depend a great deal on women for establishing this new economy.

Woman plays an all-important part in shaping the mind of the child, as she is almost in complete charge of it during the most impressionable stage of its life. It is what a child learns from its mother in regard to religion, morality, art and rules of behaviour, that in essence remains with it through life.

Nor is her influence over man insignificant, as mother or wife. How many men owe their greatness to the influence of their mothers on their lives, and how many have been inspired to greatness by their wives? If women can be thus an influence for good, they can also be a drag on men, preventing them from progress. Adam fell through Eve's sin, according

to the Bible, and even today, however enlightened a man may be, he finds it impossible to introduce any reforms in his home, so long as his mother or wife will have nothing to do with what she considers his new fangled ideas. He may want to eat unpolished rice as being more nutritive than polished rice, to invite his Muslim or Christian friends to his house for a meal, to educate his girls, to abolish purdah, and not to observe caste. But he can do none of these things till his mother and wife are converted.

Being in charge of the food, clothing and other necessaries of the family, woman holds the reins also in the economic sphere, as a consumer. She refuses to buy khadi and other village industry products but purchases instead British cloth, Japanese toys, German knives, Italian potatoes, Burmese rice, Australian apples, Czechoslavakian bangles, American trinkets for jewelry, and Indian factory products like Tata's soap, mill oil, sugar and vegetable ghee. We cannot make headway with the village economy unless woman realises her duty to her neighbours and limits family consumption as far as possible to what is produced locally in the village.

You may educate the child, you may educate the man, but so long as woman is neglected, things will remain much as they are. A society cannot rise above the level of its women folk. It has been rightly said that if you educate a man, you educate an individual, but when you educate a woman, you educate a whole family. Hence it is even more important to concentrate on education of women and girls than on education of men and boys. It is necessary for us fully to realise this fact and to start intensive work among women. They have to be taught dietetics, principles of health, hygiene and sanitation, care of children, nursing, rural economics subsidiary industries, art, and above all an interpretation of religion and morality which will free their minds of superstition, caste, and communal prejudice, and fill them with zeal for bringing about better conditions of living, unity and fellow-feeling in the village. Women are the custodians of the culture of the race, and once our culture has been re-interpreted to them in terms of this new village economy, they may not only be trusted to transmit it to the coming

generation, but also, with all their special aptitude for things of the spirit, to join men in striving for the establishment of this new order.

**(8) Religion :**

Last but not least, religion is a powerful force which can aid in the rebuilding of village life. In the religious heritage of our village folk, whether they be Hindus, Mussalmans, or Christians, there is a rich mine waiting to be tapped, and it would be folly to ignore it. When the reformer aligns himself with the religious life of the people, he brings into play powerful influences from the past which are capable of working wonders. This has indeed been the secret of Gandhiji's phenomenal success. He has clothed with new meaning old ideas like *satya* (truth), *ahimsa* (non-violence), *yajna* (sacrifice), *tapasya* (renunciation), *karma* and *nishharma* (action and inaction), *bhakti* (religious devotion), sacred through centuries of religious teaching, or rather he has re-interpreated them in the light of the living conditions of today, so that he has with their help inaugurated a new era in this country almost overnight. Unlike others who, having drunk deep at the fount of Western learning, find an unbridgeable gulf between themselves and the people, and are are therefore unable to lead them, Gandhiji by penetrating to the core of ideas which have been woven into the very texture of the life of the people, and by putting them into action in his own life and surroundings, has immediately caught the imagination of the masses who give him instinctive and unstinted following. What a mighty force is then at his command who seeks to rebuild the life in the villages of our country by recourse to the religion of the people. Only he must have penetrated behind the outward crust of rules, codes, ritual, form and ceremony to the inner spirit and find in them the call to all to be done with selfishness (*ahamkara*) and to lose one's narrow finite self in the service of one's neighbour and humanity—which is in essence the teaching of every religion.

When such Religion is applied to the reconstruction of our village life, as we see it so amply illustrated in the work of Gandhiji, Reason (truth) touched with love (non-violence)

will lay the foundations of a new order. Both will be equally required, knowledge of the best kind (truth), as well as regard for the well-being of individuals (non-violence). With these for its base, the building is secure. For then the religious life of the people, their love of the sacred books, rules, codes, ritual, fasts and feasts can be directed in such a way as to lead to the welfare of all. An orthodox religious person, for instance, will rather die of starvation than eat forbidden food, say, meat, or food from the hands of an "untouchable." How valuable it will be if such firm adherence to a principle, even at the cost of one's life, is directed to ends which are good for the community, say e.g., to refuse at all costs to eat, wear or use anything but what is produced in one's neighbourhood. New life will then be put into old institutions, and in some cases the new life will crystallise into new forms and social habits stamped with the authority of Religion.

For this great task, it is needless to say, the village worker must himself be a disciplined devotee of truth and non-violence. Not only so, he must, as Islam, Christianity or Hinduism has always taught, be selfless, for when self comes in, truth is distorted and non-violence flies to the winds. Hence it is that in our ancient social order the Brahmin, who was to occupy himself with spiritual pursuits, was divested of responsibility for looking after his own needs, which became the concern of the others in the village. The nation-builder must be, if we may so describe him, a religious beggar, a naked fakir, in the true sense of the word. Unless such truly religious men, devoted whole-heartedly to knowledge and non-violence, are at the helm of affairs, any edifice that is erected must sooner or later come down with a crash. This is the lesson which India out of her rich spiritual heritage has to teach. Admirable plans of economic reconstruction, which are out to secure merely a higher standard of material wealth for our people without reference to the eternal principles of truth and non-violence, can only land us in ruin and disaster. If we wish for our people, economic stability, and a high standard of thought and conduct, we cannot afford to banish Religion, or selflessness and regard for the welfare of one's neighbour, from human affairs. In giving such central place

to Religion and morality, Villagism differs vitally from all other schemes of economic reconstruction. Building the village thus on the eternal principles of Religion will ensure co-operation, interdependence and mutual helpfulness among the people, and a curbing of the self in the interests of others. Having learnt to co-operate in a small sphere, they will readily recognise the need for co-operation and helpfulness in the larger sphere of the nation and the world.

(*B*) *Reconstruction through State Aid:*

It is hardly necessary to say that the economic life of a country is bound up inextricably with its political life, and that especially in a subject country, it is what it is primarily because of policies followed or not followed by a foreign Government interested in using it for its own ends. Any one who has thought about economic reconstruction of the country finds that, as things are at present, he is up against factors over which no individual or private organisation can have control, especially in regard to questions relating to land and agriculture. Hence it is that in dealing with what we as individuals may do today to improve the economic life in villages, we have said practically nothing about agricultural reconstruction, vital though that is for the life of our nation. Agricultural reconstruction for the most part, as well as many problems relating to the industrial life of our people, involve Governmental action, and it will be necessary therefore to move the Government if any fundamental changes are to result. We shall here barely mention some of these factors, as they will have to be borne in mind, so long as the present political order remains with us.

1. Land tenure and land revenue should be modified to enable agriculture to bring in a greater income to the peasant. There should be a planned consolidation of holdings and an equitable basis for land assessment; land revenue should be allowed to be paid in kind.
2. Irrigational facilities will have to be provided, soil erosion prevented, and waste land reclaimed.
3. Research will have to be undertaken to improve the livestock, the fertility of the soil, the technique of

agriculture, village implements and processes, and to start new industries wherever possible.

4. Forest laws will have to be made to suit the village producer; and forests, owned and controlled by the State, should be operated to benefit village industries.

5. Mineral resources should be conserved by the State for local use in the manufacture of goods, and not exported.

6. Debt, which at present acts as a dead weight on the village producer, should be helped to be liquidated or considerably reduced without involving undue hardship to the creditor.

7. Loans should be made available to village producers on easy terms.

8. It will be necessery to see that through taxation and through the exaction of Municipalities, Local Boards and Malguzars, the economic life of the people is not injured nor their taxable capacity reduced. At present these exactions hamper the village producer at every turn.

9. The State must stimulate village production through its purchases, even if it can buy cheaper elsewhere. Otherwise it will be guilty of creating unemployment among its citizens, and thus reducing their taxable capacity on which it depends.

10. A State that is interested in village industries will even tax factory goods in order to enable village products to compete favourably with machine-made goods. As it is, factories get the benefits of protection, while the village producer is left to his own fate.

11. The exchange ratio will have to be fixed with the sole purpose of aiding the Indian producer, and currency and credit made to serve the same end.

12. Marketing, grading and standardising of village products should be done with the help of experts.

13. Transport facilities, in the way of favourable freight rates and good roads, will have to be provided.
14. Adult education should be organised, and education of all children of school going age should centre round village crafts and agriculture.
15. Medical aid should be made available in villages.

In all these ways the State can give a powerful impetus to life and activity in the villages. On the other hand, so long as things are as they are, and nothing is done to alter them, all efforts of village reformers can avail but little, for many of the handicaps under which the village producer labours are due to Governmental policy and can be removed only by a change in this policy. To attempt under present conditions to make headway in bringing about improvement in the economic condition of villagers is almost like trying to run with one's legs tied. But that does not mean that we must sit and wait for the Government to be converted. The condition of our villagers is too desperate to allow of such procrastination. Individuals and organisations must do all that is possible in spite of these obstacles; and as the terrible plight in which our people are, has arisen primarily from adopting the purely competitive economy which is alien to our civilisation and culture, they have to be persuaded to turn over from a competitive economy to a corporate economy, to produce for their own requirements and to consume only what is produced by their neighbours.

### *B. The Political Aspect*

**1. Political life under Villagism, a true democracy:** Under such a village economy the political life of the country will be completely revolutionised, for such decentralised economic units imply a decentralised political organisation. The village, being a little self-sufficient world in itself, will be administered by a few, who have the confidence and respect of the rest. Being of the village, they will be well conversant with the problems confronting it and deeply interested in seeing that their village grows and prospers. It will not have to look beyond itself for its admininstration, the Governments

at the centre and in the provinces existing primarily for dealing with foreign affairs, and for undertaking key industries, public utilities and exploitation of natural resources in the interests of the villages, and functioning as co-ordinating agencies. Even key-industries, pubic utilities and exploitation of natural resources may be undertaken by the villages co-operatively, if possible.

As a matter of fact till lately, the villages were such entirely self-dependent units. One of the factors that put an end to these self-governing communities was the policy introduced by the British, in their eagerness to raise as much land revenue as possible, of dealing direct with the cultivator himself for revenue rather than as formerly with the village community as a whole. Besides, the Government being foreign, neither understood the worth of indigenous institutions which it thus ruthlessly destroyed, nor could it afford to run the risk of leaving so much power in the hands of the people. So the judicial and administrative functions formerly carried on by the Panchayat, or elected village executive committee, were taken over by the British Government of India and centralised in itself, thus destroying democratic rule in the country. But since the system of self-governing villages belongs to our traditions it will not be difficult to revive it, and to get the villages once more to manage their own affairs, as formerly, by means of their own elected Panchayats.

The Panchayat then will deal with practically everything that concerns the village—alloting of land to the people, collection of land revenue to be paid by the village as a whole to the Government, distribution of work, trade, finance, organisation and supervision of co-operatives, education, sanitation, health, water-supply, lighting, erection and maintenance of public buildings, roads, recreation and such like. Expenses thus incurred may be met by revenue to be paid in kind by the villages, fees of various kinds, fines for infringement of rules, and voluntary donations contributed on festive occasions like birth, marriage, etc. Also free labour for a specified number of days in a year may be required to be given by the villagers for the construction of public buildings, roads, wells, and such like.

The Panchayat will also settle disputes which arise, and maintain law and order within its boundaries. The unit of administration being small, public opinion alone even without the aid of administrative action will go a long way towards controlling the recalcitrant individual. As every one in the village will know every one else, it will not be easy for an individual to commit crime or go against the wishes of the group. Very little force will be required under such circumstances, even in a society not pledged to non-violence, to maintain discipline. Besides, social and religious conventions as well as education may be depended on to work imperceptibly to prevent the individual from acting contrary to the interests of society, and to direct his energies into channels useful for the community. This is a much better way of getting a person of his own accord to do what society wants than to force him by threat of punishment and external compulsion. The very fact that all the people of the village will have their appointed tasks and an income sufficient for their needs, and that there will be no great inequality in wealth or status, will keep them contented. But if in spite of this, there is riot and disorder, it will be quelled by a band of public spirited volunteers, trained and disciplined, who will be prepared to oppose the rioters non-violently. When the rioters see their brothers, known for their public spiritedness and non-violence in every detail of their everyday life, ready to die opposing them, willing to give their grievances a patient hearing and anxious to go to the furthest extent to concede their demands, it will not be difficult to quieten them. Such a band of volunteers will also have to train itself in methods of non-violent resistance to deal with dacoits and marauders from neighbouring villages. As a matter of fact, there will be hardly any occasion for this under an economy based on barter, for where there is little or no money, there will be no value for gold or silver, and even ornaments will be made out of material, easily obtainable and capable of serving the purpose of beautification, like coloured stones, glass, wood or clay covered with lac or paint. If the dacoits come for grain, it should be easy enough for the village to offer to send its best men to the village of the dacoits to teach them to

produce all that they require. When production in each village is for its own use, and not for profit, there will be no purpose served in its seeking to keep the secrets of its success to itself. In this way, for all its essential functions, the village will be entirely self-dependent.

But this does not mean that it will shut itself up from the rest of the world like a frog in the well. It cannot if it tried. Even for its own economic life it would have to co-operate, as we have already stated, with neighbouring villages and with other provinces. For dealing with matters which arise in relation to neighbouring villages, provinces and the country, there may be district, provincial and national administrations. The villages will elect their district administrations, the district administrations the provincial, and the provincial the national with a president as the chief executive. The national government at the centre will have little to do beyond acting as a co-ordinating agency and dealing with foreign affairs. The actual administration of the country will thus be in the hands of the several local units.

Today, under a centralised economic order, the tendency is all the other way. It is a movement towards a centralised political administration, which seeks to improve and reform all the member groups from above. When problems are thus centralised and dealt with in the mass, they become almost incapable of solution. The plans devised do not fit individual cases, and they require a whole army of officers to deal with them and enforce uniform action throughout the length and the breadth of the country. It thus gives rise to an organisation which is huge, unwieldy, and slow to move. It puts too much power in the hands of a few at the centre. Remote as the centre is from the village, the desires of the village have little chance of a hearing at the centre through its so-called representatives, voted as they have been to power by fair means or foul. So that a central government controlling the life of the village—though democratic in form according to Western ideas of democracy—will be a veritable oligarchy preventing the free growth and development of the villages, and stifling out of existence real government of the people, by the people, and for the people.

The West is perplexed, for, try as it will, democracy seems to elude its grasp, and if anything appears to be receding further and further away from it day by day. Is this not because the West is moving more and more towards centralisation? For, as we have already pointed out, centralisation in the economic sphere inevitably leads to centralisation in the political sphere, i. e. to the emergence of an all-powerful State which monopolises power and puts an end to individual freedom. This is indeed the greatest danger of our times. Even in capitalistic countries, the State is increasingly intervening in economic affairs and it is becoming impossible to prevent it doing so. If we are to have real democracy and freedom for the individual, therefore, we must be done with centralised methods of production as far as possible. Centralisation is the very opposite of self-government for the several units which compose the nation. True democracy, on the other hand, can exist only under decentralisation where the several units live their own lives and determine their own affairs, and have a central government only for such purposes as require joint action of all the constituent units, and cannot be tackled by each separately.

Under such a political order progress and advancement will be rapid, for no unit will want to remain backward when through easy communication it will be in touch with improvements in other villages. It is sometimes thought that if India had been a small country, the work of reconstruction would have been easy, but in view of its size the task is well nigh impossible. There need be no such feeling of despair in a decentralised social order, for however big the country, the units composing it are small, and if each unit assumed resposibility for its own development, the work of reconstruction is done. When, however, a central government seeks to do everything itself, progress will be slow and it will have to use violence to enforce its decrees on the several units, even as for instance if one man, however enlightened and efficient he may be, tries to do the work of everybody himself he fails; but if he distributes the work amongst many, it gets done in an instant, and without friction or violence. Thus through managing their own affairs themselves the villages will become resourceful

and self-reliant. Much of the despair and inertia which exist today in villages, working as a dead weight and preventing them from wanting to improve their condition, can well be understood; for as things are at present, as we have pointed out, they have to struggle with forces over which they have no control—an antiquated system of land tenure, international competition, taxation, Governmental policy in regard to currency and exchange, transport, forest laws, difficulty of obtaining loans from the State, and such like. But if the State by its policies interfered as little as possible with the life of the village, and each unit produced primarily for itself and looked after its affairs, then the people of the village, being in full control of what affects them, may be expected to strive with fresh hope and vigour for their own improvement and advancement. New life will then flow into the various parts of the nation invigorating it and filling it with fresh health and vitality. Instead of the Western mock democracy by vote, where people are deceived into thinking that they are managing their own affairs when as a matter of fact some power-seekers are doing it for them, we shall have true democracy, where people really and truly govern themselves.

**2. The Communal Problem:** The Hindu-Muslim question, which looms so large under the so-called democratic Government set up by the British in India, was hardly known formerly and does not exist even today in the villages, which are still untouched by modern political power-seekers and job-hunters; nor does it exist in the Indian States except for very minor exceptions. In villages, Hindu and Muslim are bound together by common work, joys and sorrows—each influencing the other in language, customs, arts and crafts, music and literature, and each joining with the other in observance of festivals. This merging of Hindu and Muslim has gone on to such an extent that it is difficult now to extricate ourselves from Muslim influence in our national language, arts and crafts, music, literature and social life, even if we wished. And yet there was no central State or power forcing Hindus and Muslims to combine together. It was a natural evolution

arising from people living together in villages. Where there was a decentralised corporate economic order, co-operation and unity developed, between the people concerned, Hindu and Muslim alike, without any planning and enforcing.

Far from national unity having been conferred on us by the British, as is often claimed, it would seem from our classical literature and the religion of the people that we were much more unified in the past than we are today, and that if anything we are now in danger of losing the national unity which had been sedulously fostered and successfully established by our ancestors in the past. The unity engendered of old was not as now the mere mechanical unity of political adminstration, or the unity that comes forom a temporary combination to drive out a foreign foe, but a real unity of culture, thought and aspiration. As against this, under the present centralised administration, there is nothing but communal conflict and envy due primarily to economic causes brought about by breaking up the old village units.The country was never so divided as today into mutually exclusive groups, each wishing to further itself at the cost of the other. Not only has antagonism developed between Hindus and Muslims, but also between one province and another, and one language and another. Even within Hinduism, there is rivalry and opposition, which has recently increased to such an extent that the Hindu scriptures which till now were revered throughout the land by Hindus, whether Aryan, Dravidian or "untouchable", are today being reviled by a section of the people of the south and of the "untouchables" as being nothing but a device of the Aryans to dominate over them, with the result that these sections are inclined even to find common ground with the Muslims against the Hindus, while as a matter of fact Aryan and Dravidian are so intermingled in Hindu literature and religion that it is now as difficult to separate them as to separate water from milk.

Such is the disruption taking place in our country before our very eyes, and yet it is claimed that the British have unified us into a nation. If the British have made us think, act and feel as one, and thus brought about real

unity amongst us, it is only with reference to the growing opposition of all the communities to the foreign ruler. But such a unity having come into existence because of a foreign power is likely also to cease with it. Indeed owing to conditions favourable to communal dissention introduced into the Government by the British, we are today further from the goal of communal harmony and national unity than we were even fifty years ago. Thus with the break up of the village units of old, and the introduction of a centralised form of administration, based on communal distinctions, there is growing disunity, and with concentration of power in the Government, and dislocation of economic life in villages and consequent poverty, there is a mad scramble for seats, jobs and offices as between the communities, and consequently strife and communal warfare on a nationwide scale fostered deliberately by foreign rule which is interested in keeping us apart. Under the circumstances friendship between the communities has vanished into thin air, and cannot come about, it would appear, by artificial methods. The environment must be such as will itself promote it. Such an environment was provided in the past by the corporate village economy, as we have just pointed out. Far from decentralisation disintegrating the country into warring elements, as might be feared, it would appear that it is decentralisation that promotes unity and fellow-feeling, while centralisation makes for strife and envy between the provinces, the castes and the creeds—for the simple reason that decentralisation means a corporate economy where all the members co-operate together for a common purpose, viz. to meet the needs of the village; whereas centralisation means a competitive political order, all the elements of the nation rising against each other in their greed for power and honour, and thus leading to communal and social cleavages.

**3. End of Imperialism and War:** The whole trouble today, as we have repeatedly pointed out, is that centralised production inevitably breeds control over others, whether under Capitalism or under Socialism, and with it therefore violence and discontent. So long as the roots of violence are thus allowed to remain in the economic order, no amount

of effort to prevent civil strife, imperialism and war will avail. The present war ended with the use of the atom bomb, and people hoped that as the atom bomb released forces which could wipe out not only whole cities, but also countries, and humanity itself, its discovery would necessarily put an end to war. This however is not supported by developments in the international sphere. On the other hand, atom bomb or not, the world is seething with discontent, and nations are already lining up against each other, and are said to be preparing for the next war. As each new destructive weapon was invented e. g. the Zeppelin, the submarine, the bomb, or the poison gas, it was thought that destruction through it would be so terrible that humanity would come to its senses and put an end to all wars. But this has not happened. On the contrary, what has taken place is that scientists have been requisitioned to devise counter-weapons to make these inventions ineffective, nay more, to devise other and more terrible weapons. The facts of history are thus contrary to the belief that war can be ended by devising more and more terrible weapons of destruction.

Peace cannot come, it would seem, through such means or through treaties,leagues of powerful nations, establishment of an international State, international policing, or even through disarmament, and certainly not through preaching from house-tops, or raising of holy hands in prayer. It can come only when centralised production, which is the root cause of envy, hatred and strife between nation and nation, is removed from the economic order. For so long as that remains, individuals and States will always find ways and means of circumventing laws and solemn agreements, in order to capture more and more power for themselves over others. Wars to end wars, or to establish democracy are childish and senseless. It is like wanting to put out fire by starting a bigger fire, thinking that the bigger fire will put out the lesser. The bigger fire will indeed swallow up the lesser, only the result will not be better but several times worse. No attempt which seeks to establish peace or democracy by forcing others to conform to the wishes of a few, who are powerful enough to lay down the law, can succeed. On the other hand, it will only be an

invitation to individuals or nations, who today are prevented from self-expression, to rise in revolt at the first available opportunity. And as all centralisation inevitably means a few exercising power over the many, we can have no peace till centralisation gives place to decentralisation—the economy of power and violence to the economy of peace and non-violence. Unless the day to day work and life of individuals is organised on a non-violent basis, and they are left free to look after their affairs themselves, as is possible only under decentralised production, we cannot expect to root out violence in the national or international sphere. For once the desire to exercise power over others is allowed in a small sphere, it will not stop till it spreads out its tentacles to hold the whole world in its death-embrace, leading inevitably to hatred, crime, lawlessness, war and bloodshed. The decentralised economy is alone, then, what can provide the economic basis of a non-violent society.

Further, when the life of the nation is thus scattered in innumerable villages all over the country, and not centred in a few cities as in the industrialised countries of the world, it will not collapse easily when attacked by a foreign power. We are told that owing to the fact that the atom bomb can wipe out large cities in one explosion, America is considering breaking up its cities into small units of not more than 200,000 inhabitants each. The secret of China's successful resistance of Japan was partly that her people and her production were scattered all over the country, and merely bombing and destroying of cities or industrial centres could not paralyse or annihilate the nation.

Indeed, there will be little or no desire on the part of any foreign power to attack or take possession of a people so organised, as the only reason for its now seeking to lay hands on other countries is what it can get for itsef in the way of raw materials and markets. But where under a corporate economy the villages grow raw materials primarily for their own requirements, and do not consume articles imported from outside, no foreigner will set greedy eyes on them. This will be a non-violent way of shaking off our present alien rulers and preventing any others from taking their place.

But, it may be asked, how can a country organised on the basis of our village economy save itself if invaded by a highly armed power? It is obvious that it cannot hope to do so by resorting to arms, for in that case it must be as well equipped as, or even better equipped than, its invader. For this purpose, it must control the entire life of the nation, its industries and its agriculture, its production and its consumption, and it can do this only under complete centralisation, which is the very antithesis of the order we have been advocating. Not only so, if it is to be able by arms to resist aggression it must have plenty of surplus wealth. President Roosevelt said lately (November 1944) that the war was costing the United States 250 million dollars a day, and in the White Paper issued by the British Government on November 28, 1944, it was stated according to Reuter, that the last five years of war had cost Britain 25 thousand million pounds. To obtain such vast wealth, it would be necessary for us to control also other countries for minerals, food and other raw materials, especially mineral oil, as what can be had in our country of these is insignificant as compared with the resources available to Russia, the United States of America, or to the British Empire. But we cannot have any such control over other countries, for the great military powers are either in possession of them or will prevent us from taking possession of them. To resist foreign aggression by arms is for us therefore impossible.

But it may be thought that though we may not be able to defend ourselves by arms single-handed, we may like China take the help of powerful military States, and thus ward off foreign aggression. In this way, however, danger lies, for though we may thus escape coming under the thumb of the invader, there is nothing to save us from falling under the heels of our erstwhile allies who, we may rest assured, will not help us, without bringing us under their sphere of influence, or in other words under their exploitation. Besides, there is no saying when the defeated foe will not return to the fight with redoubled vigour. In fact defeat in war rankles in the breast, and will not allow a

nation to rest till it has wreaked vengeance. There is therefore absolutely no use our pinning our faith in arms. Our only hope, even from the purely tactical point of view, is to organise our economic life in such a way as not to attract the greed of the foreigner, and to cultivate moral strength whereby we may refuse to co-operate with, or bend before, the invader. In the last analysis, this is the only method whereby the nations of the world can be saved from being swallowed up by an all-powerful military State, and saved, not just for today or tomorrow, but for all time.

This is the experiment which Gandhiji has been trying in our country, and which can bear fruit only as we advance towards this new village economy and gain experience in organising ourselves for non-violent resistance. We must regard our village movement, therefore, not merely as a means of ameliorating the poverty of our masses, but really as a part of a new technique for resisting exploitation and foreign aggression through non-violent non-co-operation, and putting an end to imperialism and war.

It may be argued, however, that this is not a practical proposition. We cannot get a whole nation to become so high-souled as to die rather than co-operate with the invader. In reply we may state that the masses always follow their leaders, and if a few selfless leaders whom the masses respect are convinced that there is no salvation for themselves or the nation except through non-co-operation with the enemy, and organise the masses accordingly, the task is done. If the few educated people who today co-operate with the foreigner to rule India refuse to give their co-operation, we can shake off British imperialism in a day. In an individualistic economy, such as prevails today, where the loot is for him who can obtain it, individuals who are capable of leadership pursue their own ends, and even co-operate with the enemy if it will bring them private profit. But we may expect that under the corporate economy of Villagism, where education will instil into the minds of the young love of the country and sacrifice for it, and where honour will go only to those who live for the community and the nation, capable individuals will not misuse their capacity for their own ends, for thus

they will bring only social disapproval and condemnation on themselves; and if they are willing in spite of public opinion to betray the community and co-operate with the enemy for private gain, their co-operation will prove useless to the foreigner, as they will have no standing with the masses who will refuse to do their bidding. Such a development seems certainly much more within the realm of practical politics than any attempt on the part of a country like ours to drive out the foreigner by recourse to arms.

If this be so, then it is obvious that Villagism and all efforts to strengthen and unify the people through what Gandhiji has called his constructive programme are but part of a non-violent technique to abolish imperialism and war. Consequently it is such workers as have buried themselves in villages, seeking to bring about self-reliance and unity among the people and teaching through example the practice of non-violence in everyday life, that must lead the masses in the non-violent fight. Without such work, mere efforts of the moment to organise the people for non-violent resistance in the political sphere cannot succeed. Hence it is that Gandhiji has laid such great emphasis on constructive work, and has said lately that instead of constructive workers obtaining their politics from political organisations, political organisations must hereafter seek guidance in politics from constructive workers. This is not mere rhetoric or even an instinctive reaction to frustration in the political sphere, but follows logically, as we have tried to show, from an attempt to find a non-violent equivalent for war or violent resistance. We must not think of Villagism therefore as only a matter of economic arrangement but as a social order aiming at ridding the world of imperialism and war.

### *C. The Cultural Aspect*

**1. Culture:** That such a decentralised order will contribute to the greatest development of the worker, we have sought to show in our criticism of large-scale methods of production under Socialism. Culture, it must be remembered, is not a matter of possessions or acquisitions. Otherwise a mere money bag or an iron safe, with neither head nor

heart, will represent the highest goal of man. Culture, on the other hand, is a matter of the spirit, a growing into fulness, or blossoming of the dormant capacities of the individual—his mind, his heart, his soul. It is only an economic order where the individual is left in full control of his work, to plan, organise, improve, invent and beautify, that can call out, as we have seen all that is best in him, and can provide him with opportunities for the full development and expression of his personality. For him, work will be the great educator teaching him intelligence, precision, accuracy, perseverance, skill, application to detail, thoroughness, a sense of proportion, beauty, order, initiative, business management and administration, and a knowledge of the physical world and of human affairs, culminating in independence of thought, feeling and action, and resourcefulness. Is it any wonder then that under this new scheme of things, the craft is taken as the basis of educating the child ?

Today, under large-scale production, people's minds are regimented and their production and consumption standardised. They tend more and more to think alike, dress alike, eat alike, amuse themselves alike, work alike, and live and hate alike. They are becoming like tin soldiers moving their hands and legs according to a pattern fixed for them by some planning authority at the centre. By what stretch of imagination can this be called culture ? Regimentation cannot develop the individual's powers. On the contrary it puts an end to them. Only where a man's powers can have full scope for expression and development, as under a decentralised economy where he is in charge of his own work, can there be culture in the true sense of the word.

**2. Progress :** From this it follows that it cannot be said that under a decentralised economic order, things will remain at a primitive level, and there can be no progress and advancement. Such an objection arises from mistaking a multitude of goods for progress. As against this, if it is realised that progress is not so much a matter of the material environment as a growth in the intelligence, character and artistic sense of the individual, it would seem that it is only under a decentralised economic order that true progress will

be possible. On the other hand, today, under the centralised economic order, we appear to be descending below the level of the beast, hating, exploiting and destroying each other on a world scale, and reducing the average man to a standardised automaton incapable of thinking and acting for himself. In our estimation of progress if, as we urged at the very outset, we kept in mind human development as that which should provide the criterion, then we may certainly expect more progress under the decentralised than in the centralised economy.

Further, with modern modes of communication such as roads, railways, buses and radio, if in a particular region a specially useful or beautiful object is produced, it will not, under a decentralised economic order, flood the country and bring about economic dislocation and unemployment as under large-scale production, but it will be copied by progressive artisans in various localities, who being in love with their work will be eager to adopt new designs and patterns, and perhaps even improve on them. As within the village, the co-operative principle will operate, the worker will want to produce the best and latest type of article to please his immediate neighbours, and their pleasure, appreciation and esteem as well as his own joy in creating something new will be an incentive for him to keep on the watch for new ideas and to improve production. Besides, science and research will be applied to improve village methods of production. Thus things need not remain at a primitive level, and there may well be rapid progress in production.

3. **Beauty and Variety:** It is sometimes said that under factory production we are able to obtain a variety of goods to suit every taste, but that under cottage production life will be drab, colourless and unattractive. It is true that under decentralised production we cannot have an abundance of goods. But, as we have already pointed out with reference to Socialism, an abundance of goods is not necessarily a good thing, and may even be an evil, enslaving and hindering us from developing ourselves. There is nothing however to prevent cottage production from providing us all that is necessary for decent comfortable living. Today if the

cottage product is crude and unattractive, it is only because the village artisan has fallen on evil days. No one patronises his goods. He is starved and under-nourished, and finding his craft unable to compete with large-scale industry, the more adventurous and intelligent of his trade have left it going elsewhere for more lucrative avenues of employment. But when the corporate economy is re-established, there is no reason why the hand product should not be even superior in quality to the mill product. In the realm of arts and crafts, even now the handmade article easily excels the mill product. Today the consumer has passively to accept whatever the factory provides, with the result that his tastes have been regimented. Under cottage production in his neighbourhood, on the other hand, he can direct the producer to make goods according to his choice. This will stimulate not only the artistic sense of the consumer but also that of the producer, and promote originality and the joy of self-expression in both.

**4. The Question of Leisure:** Nor should it be thought that under this order, there will be no leisure for recreation or amusement. It is sometimes imagined that Villagism expects people to be working all the time, to be spinning, for example, even during their leisure, and as all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy, people cannot develop under such a system. This objection arises from a complete misunderstanding of the position. No one suggests that there should be no rest from work. If spinning is recommended today, it is only because our masses are becoming demoralised for lack of adequate employment. For them to earn even a pice an hour through spinning is better than to lose all hope and faith in themselves. When every one is otherwise profitably engaged, there will be no need for people to spin, and one can even conceive of yarn being manufactured at that time by spinning mills run by the State, or co-operatively by the people, and being woven into cloth by cottage weavers. What the spinning programme aims at then is not to do away with leisure, but to remove despair and fill people with confidence in their own powers to help themselves.

Under Villagism, however, leisure will not be so much in demand as in factory production; for, as we have already pointed out, when work has various sides to it, as when it is done on a cottage scale, there will not be any great craving for leisure. We know how in our country, our artisans sought no leisure but found perpetual delight in their work, so much so that their untiring industry expressed itself in exquisite designs in cloth and intricate carvings in ivory, brass, wood and stone. Work of such excellence could not have been executed except by people who had leisure, i. e. were not rushed for time. It is if anything this modern machine age which seems ever on the go, restless, impatient and nervous. The people of old were calm, self-composed and leisurely. They seemed by contrast to live in eternity. Except at certain times of the year, when their fields required all their attention, they worked when they liked. They had time to gather round the family hearth, or the village common, to listen to the great epics, religious and philosophical discourses, or for music, dance or drama. It seems strange that we of the modern world, who seem to have no time even for our families, should accuse the old world of not allowing any leisure. Once such an idea is started, it seems to go from mouth to mouth, and gain conviction from sheer force of repetition. Further, even if the people of old had no leisure, as compared with us of today—which seems to fly in the face of facts—there is no reason why with the aid of science, and improvements in the technique of cottage production, the small-scale producer should not have all the leisure he needs. Till now science has not been applied to problems connected with cottage production, and there is no saying how much drudgery and time it may save for the villager when it is. And then the farmer may devote his spare time to music or painting, and the artisan to literature or philosophy. When his leisure is related thus to productive manual labour he will be able to derive much more profit from it than if his intelligence were deadened by mechanical factory labour.

**5. Co-operation and fellow-feeling:** Further, when production is carried on by occupational groups working together

to meet the requirements of the village community, we shall have true interdependence and co-operation like that which exists between members of a family. As we have already said, the smaller such village communities, the more closely will its members be bound together in an indivisible, organic unity. Only then will people of their own accord live and work on the principle of each for all and all for each, and take delight in working for each other rather than merely for their own individual gain.

The individual will then lose his little narrow self in the larger self of the community; and the larger self of the community will depend for its existence on the life of even the least of its little ones. The individual will find that when he serves his community he serves himself, and the community will find that as it has no life apart from that of its members, its good lies in the good of even the humblest of its members. Thus the illusion which makes each individual work for himself in opposition to his neighbour, and which leads to ruin and disaster both for himself and his neighbour, as we find so amply proved by the destruction and bloodshed in the world today, will give place to the wisdom which sees one's true self in the self of one's neighbour; and the community which seeks to advance itself at the cost of depriving some of its members of freedom and self-expression will be substituted by one which is based on consideration for the welfare of the lowliest of its members.

The individual who is a member of such a community will realise that he and his community are really one, that his self is not exclusive but inclusive, in that it embraces within itself the self of his neighbours, and that he truly lives only when he does not live to himself but for others. It is only a society based on this ultimate truth that can endure for all time, not one that is built on the error of conceiving of the individual as an entity by himself whose interests lie in opposition to those of every one else. A society based on the latter conception must end in ruin like a house built on sand, while the one erected on the idea of the ultimate unity of each with all cannot but endure owing to its foundation partaking of the essential structure of the universe

Work in such a society will be worship in the real sense of the word—a means of identifying oneself, not merely in thought but in deed, with the wider self of the community, and thus with the universal Self of all being. Economic life will then be raised to a spiritual level, and instead of work being degraded into servitude done anyhow merely with the idea of earning one's bread, it will become transformed into a means of reaching the Divine, a labour of love, done for the good of one's neighbours, and leading the individual out of his own little self into the wider self of the community and thus to the Universal Self which abides in all alike. Then in the place of sordid greed and cruel competition we shall have genuine unity, a sense of belonging to each other for good or for ill with no thought of I versus thou, or mine versus thine, and true fellow-feeling and co-operation; and the work and everyday life of the average man will prepare him for overcoming the Maya of separateness and realising the essential oneness of all, taught to us through the centuries. Thus we shall have evolved an economic system embodying the genius of our country at its purest, deepest and best.

**6. National and International Unity**: It may be argued, however, that though this new economy may lead to the development of a strong community sense amongst the inhabitants of a village, it is only large - scale methods of production, which bind vast sections of the people together in huge nation-wide or world-wide economic units, that can develop a genuine sense of mutual interdependence and unity in the nation and the world. The village economy, on the other hand, it may be contended, is likely to split up the country and the world into innumerable elements, each self-contained, cut off from the rest, and incapable of co-operating with the others. We have touched on the communal aspect of this question in connection with Hindu-Muslim unity, and in the section on education suggested that the several village communities should be welded into nationality and into internationalism by means of education. Now for a few words on the cultural side. The assumption is that as large-scale methods of production make large

numbers of people work together, they promote a feeling of oneness and mutual dependence. This idea has been repeated so much of late, by those who are interested in maintaining large-scale methods of production for the profits they obtain thereby, that people have begun to give credence to it. But is it true that we in India feel more one with the British than we did formerly just because we produce cotton for their factories, and their factories manufacture cloth for us? We do this with Japan also. And yet we have not been drawn closer to the Japanese culturally. On the other hand, it would seem that we may have felt really friendly if we had been left to produce for ourselves, and came in contact with the British or the Japanese only culturally and on equal terms. Today, in the place of co-operation and friendliness, economic dependence on each other has only produced a growing feeling of non-co-operation, antagonism and hate. What can bring about unity between nations, it would appear, is not economic dependence, but cultural contact. If we each produced what we wanted for ourselves, instead of competing with each other, and if railways, aeroplanes, steamships, roads and motor vehicles brought us into contact with each other merely culturally, there is much more likelihood of unity, mutual appreciation and fellow-feeling growing up between us than when we are bound together by the economic chains of production and consumption. One of the reasons why we feel more friendly with China than with Japan is that our contact with China is not economic, while with Japan it is. So it would seem that if we would promote co-operation, understanding and unity between people, it is best to keep them apart in the economic sphere but bring them together in the cultural. "Ideas, knowledge, art, hospitality, travel, these are the things which should of their nature be international. But let goods be home-spun whenever it is reasonably and conveniently possible", are not words of Gandhiji as one might think, but of no other than the well-known British economist, Keynes.*

This is what will happen in the decentralised economic order, when with modern methods of communication there will

* *New Statesman and Nation*, July 15, 1933, in article entitled "National self-sufficiency."

be free cultural intercourse between the various elements which compose our country, although economically they will be as far as possible independent of each other. In the past, in spite of difficulty of communication, the village was culturally of one piece with the rest of the country, though economically self-sufficient and self-contained. So that in spite of diversity, there is even till today an undoubted unity in religion, philosphy, music, dance, drama, sculpture and the like, throughout the length and breadth of our land, making the thought, conduct, ideals and customs of the people in the north, south, east or west of the country distinctly of a type as compared with that of other peoples. This cannot have happened if the modern assumption that it is only if we are economically bound together that we can be united, was true. On the other hand, if there is truth in what we have contended, it is only when our varions elements are economically independent of each other, and therefore do not compete with and strive against each other, that there will be a chance of our achieving a strong cultural unity and nationhood. Education for nationhood, a net-work of communications bringing us into cultural contact with each other, and a common government for the affairs of the nation as a whole, will suffice to keep us together and provide a unity through all the diversity of our national life.

In the same way, it would seem, that it is when nations are self-sufficient for all practical purposes that there can be real respect for each other and genuine fellow-feeling or internationalism. So long as nations do not stand on their own legs, the union in which they combine will be used by the strong for their own benefit. This will lead to exploitation of the weak and constant friction and strife between the strong. What chance is there for the development of real friendliness between nations under those circumstances ? For a long time to come, if not perhaps for ever, all nations will not be equally strong, and where there is no equality, an international World State which pretends in a representative capacity to control the life of nations will be in reality but serfdom of the many to one or two powerful master states. True internationalism, or mutual friendliness between nations,

can come about only when they are free to look after their own affairs as best they can but without infringing on the rights of other nations, and come together only for cultural purposes or for settlement of the few matters which may affect them in common. Internationalism of the modern type, on the other hand, based as it is on large-scale production and lust for monopoly of power, is nothing but an extreme form of individualism and selfishness which seeks under the guise of universalism and international co-operation to divide up the world for economic exploitation by a few highly industrialised countries. True internationalism requires that strong nations should not seek thus to dominate over others but to serve them. And such nations can serve them best by leaving them alone to develop in their own way, helping them only when asked by them and along lines indicated by them. This kind of internationalism or genuine co-operation and mutual helpfulness between peoples can come about only on the principle of Swadeshi here advocated, the principle whereby nations respect each other's rights to control their own affairs without impinging on the rights of others. It is only when nations thus leave each other alone, which they cannot do unless they abide strictly by the resolve to produce only for their own requirements, and come together voluntarily for each other's benefit, that a feeling of real friendship, understanding and unity can arise between them.

**7. Non-violent strength, peace and freedom:** In reconstructing the economic life of our people, then, it will not do for us merely to be attracted by the multitude of goods which Capitalism or Socialism makes possible. If, as a nation we desire to achieve strength, peace and freedom, we must pursue a method all our own, the method of decentralisation which leaves power in the hands of the people themselves, and requires them, living as they do in small village communities, to fend for themselves and depend on themselves for meeting all their requirements as far as they are able. This is not only suited to the geographical conditions and cultural traditions of our country, but also conduces to the development of real strength in the people and to the establishment of peace and freedom. For on the one hand, it is only when people them-

selves manage their own affairs, as they can do in reality only in small self-contained groups, and depend directly on their own thought and action for all that affects their everyday life, that they can become resourceful, self-reliant and strong; and on the other, it is only thus that there can be an end of war and exploitation.

For, in the first place, when the people of a country are strong and self-reliant, it will not be easy for the government to plunge them in war, as the government will be helpless if they are strong enough to refuse to fight, or to supply it with materials. The masses everywhere dislike war intensely, for in the end it is they who have to sacrifice their lives and their all in it, so that if they had their way wars may well nigh be impossible. But today under centralised methods of production and consequent centralised administration, the people are regimented, spoonfed, dependent, and lack faith in their own power. Consequently it is easy for governments to cow them down by threat of punishment, deceive them by false propaganda, and conscript them to fight against their will. So long as the people are thus weak and dependent, they will always fall a prey to the devices of the power-seeking few who hold the reins of government, and will allow themselves to be used as gun-fodder at the will of the government. It is only under decentralisation that the people, through depending on themselves for all that affects their everyday life, can become sufficiently strong, courageous and self-reliant, to be able to say no to a government which wants to land them in war against their will. Centralisation, as we have pointed out earlier, inevitably produces concentration of power in the hands of the government and consequent weakness and helplessness in the people, while decentralisation makes for strength in the people and lack of power in the government, which may in time even "wither away." And as it is governments which lead to war, the less powerful they are, the more peace we shall have.

In the second place, where there are only small producers with cottage implements, they will not become a menace to world peace, as firstly, their workshops cannot be converted into factories for armaments manufacture, and secondly,

there will not be any incentive for them to upset world equilibrium, as under decentralised production they will not require more raw materials and markets than are available in their neighbourhood.

In the third place, when the villages are dependent on themselves for all their primary requirements, they will in that very fact become free from exploitation, whether by the capitalist or the imperialist. For it is when we cannot do without what is in another man's control, be it land, money, essential commodities, machinery or railways, that we have to submit to him and let ourselves be exploited by him. But when a village community depends on its own resources for all its essential needs,it can with ease resist the exploiter.

When the task of freeing the people from exploitation is thus decentralised and done by each village group for itself, it becomes much simpler and more easy of accomplishment than when it is sought to be done *en masse* on a nation-wide or world-wide scale. Even as Stalin has found it more practical to limit Communism to Russia than to attempt it at once all over the world, it is even more practical, or, as we have argued earlier, possible to establish Communism or corporate economic life only in the small compact group of the village. When Communism is thus decentralised, it would be even more revolutionary, i.e. capable of immediatly upsetting the present economic order and freeing the masses in reality from exploitation and enslavement, than the most militant form of Marxist Communism; precisely because being decentralised it can be established by the various village units by themselves through their own constructive effort. And freedom so obtained by a village unit by its own strength can also be retained by it. Not so, a freedom obtained for it by a revolutionary clique, for then not being itself strong, it is apt only to pass from one form of serfdom to another, from the tyranny of the capitalist or the imperialist to the tyranny of an all-powerful communist State.

So sure of success, immediate and lasting in result can this method be in liberating the people from their exploiters that once it is put into effect, it will be an object lesson for all the downtrodden people of the earth, whether under

Capitalism, Imperialism, Fascism, or Communism, to follow suit and shake off their yoke now and for ever without shedding a drop of blood. Tremendous, indeed, in potentiality is therefore this new village economy.

*Conclusion*:—

Too long have human considerations been carefully excluded from the economic sphere. If India is not to follow the industrialised countries of the world into exploiting the masses, impoverishing and enslaving weaker people, and plunging men in periodical strife and bloodshed, and if in accordance with her spiritual heritage she is to show an oppressed and war-worn world the way to freedom and peace for all peoples, her only means is the establishment of an economic order which will deliberately aim at making production and consumption of a kind which will enable her people to be strong and capable of looking after themselves, without however having any need to exploit the weak or go to war with the strong. The principles of Villagism have been formulated precisely with this aim in view. When through decentralisation, the people have opportunities for acquiring strength, courage and self-reliance, and through Swadeshi they have learnt to co-operate and work for the good of their neighbours, they will not only have achieved for themselves freedom from exploitation and slavery, but also be a powerful influence for bringing about freedom from exploitation, and good-will among men. Under such a system we may be poorer in this world's goods, but we shall be on the way to establishing non-violence and peace on the secure foundations of economic life.

The method to be employed is the simplest possible. Not a violent revolution conspired and effected by a group of individuals, but the non-violent, decentralised method depending on the understanding and good-will of every citizen. We have to persuade our innumerable villages to work towards self-sufficiency in production and consumption.

Nay more, even you reader if you live in the city, and I, and every consumer in our country can at once help to bring about this new economic order if we willed to buy only products of decentralised manufacture. Do we care sufficiently for the abolition of the poverty of our people, and to make

ourselves into a strong, self-reliant, well-knit, independent people, not bowing our heads to the foreigner now and in the future, the remedy is in our own hands—to promote village production by consuming as far as possible only products of cottage manufacture, and by working for village self-sufficiency if not directly at least by refusing to buy anything but what is produced by our own village neighbours. When we do this, no foreigner will care to take possession of our land, for all that the foreigner aims at by his aggression are our raw materials and our markets. And even if he does invade the country, our people will have acquired, by managing their affairs themselves, sufficient resourcefulness, courage and non-violent strength to resist him and set his efforts at naught.

By this simple, non-violent method, then, we shall be able to establish ourselves as a free, industrious and prosperous people, simple in living perhaps, but high in thought and culture, in direct line of descent from our own great spiritual past, and able to show to a world mad with lust for wealth and power, and torn with strife and war, the way to abiding peace, freedom, progress, and good-will amongst the members of the human family.

*Appeal :—*

Whether our arguments have been convincing or not, every one must admit, whatever type of economic order he would advocate for our adoption in the future, that the best we can do at the present, when our people are dying by inches through starvation and disease, and we are helpless to move the Government, is to strive all we can as individuals to make the villager, even with the very limited resources available to him, a little more prosperous. It is certain that even political freedom will mean little if our masses, the bulk of whom live in the villages, are not profitably employed, and do not have at least some of the amenities of civilised life. Let us not then waste our time in idle controversy, but act ; begin with whatever little can be done here and now, leaving the next step to reveal itself in its turn. We do not need to see the distant scene: one step enough for us. What we can do, we have outlined in the preceding pages. It is for each to pick out from the programme what suits him or her best—be it

village sanitation, health, diet, education, social reform, anti-untouchability, communal harmony, work amongst women, co-operation, child-welfare, youth movement, recreation, literature, art, religion, agriculture or industries, and the rest will follow in due time. The field is vast and varied, and calls for the best efforts of all, men and women, officials and non-officials, Congressites and non-Congressites, Muslim Leaguers and Hindu Mahasabhaites, Communists and Socialists. We may differ in our views in regard to what is ultimately good for the country. But let us not in fighting over issues relating to the future, neglect our duty in the present—the duty which we owe to our fellowmen in the village.

# APPENDIX

## SAMPLE PLAN OF DEVELOPMENT FOR A UNIT OF TEN VILLAGES IN POHRI (GWALIOR)

*By* :—J. B. Malankar

*I. Present condition and natural resources of the ten villages* :—

*Situation* :—These villages are situated round about Krishnaganj, an educational and industrial colony in Pohri Jagir, Gwalior State. The nearest railway station is Shivpuri, twenty one miles towards the East; Pohri is connected to it by regular bus service.

*Climate* :—The climate is extreme, very cold in winter and very hot in summer. The rainfall is 30″ to 35″.

*Area* :—The total area of land in these villages is 13,958 bighas which is distributed as follows :—

| | *Bighas* | *Bighas* |
|---|---|---|
| *Cultivated land* | | |
| Irrigated by wells | 112 | |
| by tanks | 55·3 | |
| Non-irrigated | 4,732·2 | |
| Fallow | 674·5 | 5,573·10 |
| *Cultivable Waste* | | |
| Good | 685·0 | |
| Poor | 2,000·0 | |
| Very Poor | 4,759·15 | 7,444·15 |
| *For special purposes* | | |
| Habitation | 76·17 | |
| Cremation ground | 30·12 | |
| Roads etc. | 229·9 | 336·18 |
| *Bad land, rivulets etc.* | 603·15 | 603·15 |
| Total | | 13,958·18 |

*Population* :—The total population is 1913, distributed as follows :—

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Nayagaon, Katra and Krishnaganj ... | 638 |
| 2. | Jakhnod ... ... ... | 421 |
| 3. | Gwalipura ... ... ... | 264 |
| 4. | Behta ... ... ... | 162 |
| 5. | Behti ... ... ... | 151 |
| 6. | Sonipura ... ... ... | 91 |
| 7. | Khod ... ... ... | 86 |
| 8. | Randhir ... ... ... | 65 |
| 9. | Bagadiya ... ... ... | 35 |
| 10. | Baraipura ... ... ... | 0 |
| | Total ... | 1913 |

The main population consists of 'Kirars' an agricultural caste. The rest are Brahmins, shepherds, chamars, potters, telis, barbers, basors (bamboo workers), fishermen, tailors, carpenters and Bhils. Except a few people who are engaged in carpentry, pottery, weaving and leather work the rest are all agriculturists. Many people who orginally belonged to other occupations had to leave them finding them non-remunerative. Therefore the pressure on land has greatly increased.

*Distribution of population according to Occupation*

| | |
|---|---|
| Farmers | 1202 |
| Farm labourers | 401 |
| Service etc. | 310 |
| Total ... | 1913 |

*Cattle Wealth and Milking Capacity*

| Cattle | Total |
|---|---|
| Cows | 511 |
| Buffaloes | 361 |
| Bullocks | 783 |
| Calves | 856 |
| Goats | 875 |
| Sheep | 210 |
| Total | 3596 |

| Milch cattle | | Average milking per day | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Cows | 130 | Cow | 1 seer |
| Buffaloes | 90 | Buffalo | 2½ seers |

The general health of the cattle is poor. In one village there are two stud bulls but they too are not of standard quality. All the cows and buffaloes are served by ordinary bulls. Since no oil cake or grain like 'Chuni' or clusterbeans is given, and no green fodder is provided either in winter or in summer, naturally the milk yield of the cattle is very low, i. e., a milking cow on an average gives one seer of milk while a buffalo gives 2½ seers per day. The draught animals are also small in size.

*Classification of land:*

Kachhar or irrigated land :—suitable for wheat, sugarcane, etc.

Tari land :—for paddy, etc.

Mar :—Wheat, Jwar, etc.

Gouda :— ,, ,, ,,

Puth :—Pulses, etc.

Danda :—Oilseed, Bajra and such crops.

The land under cultivable waste is 685 bighas which is Mar and Kachhar, and the poor land of 2,000 bighas is Puth and Danda. That which is 4,760 bighas and very poor is mostly moram or rocky land. Lands of all description in general are wanting in manurial properties.

*Average crop Yield and Aggregate Income of the Area:—*

| Crops | Average yield per Bigha in Mds. | Area under Cultivation Bighas | Total Yield in Mds. | Rate per Md. | Total income in Rs. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Jwar | 5 | 1,685 | 8,425 | 6 | 50,550 |
| Wheat | 6 | 1,192 | 7,152 | 9 | 64,368 |
| Tilli | 2½ | 361 | 90½ | 14 | 12,635 |
| Pulses | 4 | 378 | 1,512 | 6 | 9,072 |
| Gram | 6 | 79 | 474 | 6 | 2,844 |
| Alsi (Linseed) | 5 | 304 | 1,520 | 10 | 15,200 |
| Groundnut | 5 | 179 | 895 | 7 | 6,265 |
| Paddy | 7 | 92 | 644 | 6 | 3,864 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bajra | 4 | 48 | 192 | 6 | 1,152 |
| Maize | 4 | 71 | 284 | 5 | 1,420 |
| Jaggery | 22 | 88 | 1,936 | 9 | 17,824 |
| Cotton | 2 | 60 | 120 | 10 | 1,200 |
| Miscellaneous | 4 | 367 | 1,468 | 7 | 10,275 |
| | | | Grand Total Rs. | | 1,96,669/- |

*Total yield of different crops in Mds :—*

| | |
|---|---|
| Cereals ... ... ... | 17,197 |
| Pulses ... ... ... | 2,054 |
| Oilseeds ... ... ... | 2,922½ |
| Jaggery ... ... ... | 1,936 |
| Cotton ... ... ... | 120 |
| Hemp ... ... ... | 100 |
| Ambadi ... ... ... | ... |
| Spices ... ... ... | 350 |
| Tobacco ... ... ... | 35 |
| Vegetables ... ... ... | 215 |

*Expenditure on Agriculture :—*

| | Rs. |
|---|---|
| Land Revenue in total | 9,100/— |
| Harot Tax | 900/— |
| Wages paid to farm labourers | 10,000/— |
| Expenditure on sowing seeds Rs. 4/- per Bigha | 20,000/— |
| Maintenance of 783 bulloks for ploughing at 0-3-0 per animal per day | 50,000/— |
| Implements, repairs, etc. | 600/— |
| Marketing expenses | 1,000/— |
| Total crop expenditure Rs. | 91,600/— |
| Gross income ... ... Rs. | 1,96,669/— |
| Less | |
| Expenses ... ... Rs. | 91,600/— |
| Net income from Agriculture Rs. | 1,05,069/— |

Population depending on agriculture (including their dependents) is 1603. Therefore, the per capita income per month is Rs. 5-7-3. The income from services and cottage

industries for the remaining population of 310 is Rs. 5/- per capita per month. Thus the average income of the total population is Rs. 5-6-0 per head per month.

*Educational Attainments :—*

There are 87 literate persons out of this population of 1913, making literacy among males 4·5% and among females 3%.

*Food :*—The diet is poor. The staple food of the population is mostly jwar and very little wheat. They hardly consume any milk, and ghee only very rarely. Some inferior type of vegetables are used during the monsoon months. Fruits are not available.

*Clothing :*—Their clothing is very scanty and quite a large number of them have no extra set for change or washing. They do not have sufficient bedding to protect them from the cold.

*Housing :*—The houses in the villages are of the old pattern and are badly arranged. They are congested in certain areas and no attention is paid to ventilation. There is not enough space for the inmates and no outlet for water. The villages have no regular roads or streets and no arrangement for daily sweeping and sanitation.

*Manure :*—The people do not know to prepare good compost from farmyard manure. Nobody makes use of oil-cake or artificial manures.

*Sanitation :*—The general standard of sanitation in the villages is bad. The lanes are dirty and muddy during the monsoon. There are wells for drinking water, but not much regard is paid to the purity of the water or to the cleanliness of the surroundings of the village.

*Medical Aid :*—There is a dispensary at Pohri. There is a compounder there and two Ayurvedic vaidyas. The doctor's post is vacant. The stock of medicines is small and medical help is inefficient. The people are superstitious and very rarely take medical help from the hospital. There is an arrangement for vaccination. But there is no veterinary hospital for animals.

*Communications :*—The nearest market place is Shivpuri, but people sell their produce mostly to the banias and money

lenders of Bhatnawar and Pohri. There are two metalled roads passing by in the neighbourhood of the villages. The villages are in close proximity to pakka roads. There is a branch post office at Pohri Fort.

*Indebtedness* :—Due to war boom and high prices the aggregate debts of the population are very much scaled down. What remains to be paid is about 40% of the old debts.

*Fruit Trees* :—There are no fruit trees throughout the area except a few guava trees at Jakhnod and Krishnaganj.

*Existing Natural and Artificial Resources, and Facilities of Land* :—There are 7,445 bighas of land under cultivable waste, out of which 685 bighas is good land, nearly two thousand bighas is poor but can be brought under cultivation for part use with effort, and the remaining 4,760 bighas is gravelly and rocky and unfit for cultivation.

*Tanks* :—There are in all 8 tanks, 3 near Pohri Fort, one in Krishnaganj, 2 in Jakhnod, 1 in Baraipura and 1 in Randhir. Except one tank at Jakhnod and one in Baraipura the remaining 6 are of no use for irrigation. The two that are used for irrigation require excavation and much repair.

*Wells* :—There are in all 87 wells, out of which 13 are dry and in a dilapidated condition. 14 are such as can be used only for drinking water purposes, and the remaining 60 are fit for irrigation.

*Roads* :—The two metalled roads, one from Sheopur to Shivpuri and the other from Pohri to Mohna, are in good condition. All our development villages are on either side of these roads not far away, from one to four furlongs. The length of approach roads to all these ten villages will in the aggregate be 3 miles.

*Educational Facilities* :—The Adarsh Vidyalaya is a residential High School imparting education upto Matriculation standard with arrangements for the teaching of Sanskrit. There is a good Library at the Vidyalaya and a gymnasium (vyayamshala) attached to it.

*Gramkala Mandir* :—In the Kala Mandir there are facilities for learning cottage industries, e. g., spinning, weaving, dyeing, paper-making, match-making, bee-keeping and woollen

industry. There are very few people in the villages who are earning their living by cottage industries.

*II. The Planned Standard to be attained* :—

Our object in planning is to make the village people happy and prosperous both morally and materially. This cannot be done by one-sided development. Raising the standard of living alone will not do. Moral and cultural development without adequate material advancement is not possible either. Dishonesty in people is due mostly to poverty, and poverty again is due to want of honesty on their part. So, this is a vicious circle and has to be broken from all sides.

*The Basic Standard* :—The minimum requirements of a human being are (1) Adequate and nutritious food; (2) Sufficient clothes to cover the body and protect it against cold; (3) Housing accommodation of one hundred square feet per head; (4) Facilities for education in its widest sense; (5) Medical help including maternity aid and child welfare; (6) Postal and transport facilities.

*Food* :—Balanced diet and total amount of food material required is as follows :—

| | Seers per head daily | Price Rs. | As. | Ps. | Requirements for 2,000 people per year in Mds. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cereals | ½ | 0 | 2 | 6 | 9000 |
| Pulses | 3/32 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 1687½ |
| Vegetables | 5/16 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 5625 |
| Ghee and Oil | 1/16 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1125 |
| Milk | 1/4 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 4500 |
| Fruits | 1/16 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 1125 |
| Sweets | 1/16 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 1125 |
| Wood and condiments | | 0 | 0 | 3 | |
| | | 0 | 8 | 0 | Annas per head daily. |

The cloth required is 30 yards per head per year. So for two thousand people it will be 60,000 yards.

The other items will be dealt with in detail later on.

*III. The Unit Development Organisation* :—

Left to themselves, the villagers today are not in a position to set up their own organisation, to direct the

complicated working of various activities and to adopt measures for their own development. The State or society therefore will have to take up this responsibility, and organise all sides of the villager's life for fuller development.

To begin with, there should be a 'Planning Body' of expert and intelligent people in this unit, which should continuously plan development of its various resources till conditions satisfy the minimum requirements of the people of the area. Such a body should consist of (1) A Chairman, who may be the President of the Adarsh Seva Sangh; (2) A Unit Organiser, who may be the Secretary; (3) Two experts in agriculture; (4) An expert in cattle-breeding and dairying; (5) An expert in cottage industries; (6) One in charge of co-operative activities; (7) A trained educationist on Wardha lines; (8) A doctor and health expert; (9) A veterinary doctor.

This body may be known as 'Krishnaganj Unit Development Association' and should have its headquarters at the college building at Nandan Kanan colony with a centrally situated agricultural farm, dairy farm and educational, health, co-operative and cottage industry activities. All these development activities should not remain centralised at the headquarters, which is often found to be the defect of these centralised institutions, but each activity severally and all collectively should embrace various aspects of development in the villages, and it must be seen that the developments planned by the body are satisfactorily implemented in the unit. Concrete results obtained in the actual advancement of conditions in villages in the sphere of economic and educational development, and in improvement in health and social conditions, alone justify the setting up of this elaborate organisation.

*Essential Qualifications of the Workers:*—Every care should be taken in the selection of the staff. Besides qualifications for their respective branch of activities, they should be motivated with ideals of service.

*Model Agricultural Farm:*—The model agricultural farm should be started adjoining the Training College building. A farm of about 40 bighas will serve the present purpose. Research work in new varieties of crops, and production and

supply of good seeds to this unit of villages should be the main activity of the farm. A small laboratory; seeds store and improved implements should be other side-activities of this farm.

All new crops before being recommended for adoption to the agriculturists in the area should first be tried on the model farm. The experiments should be carried out with simple implements and with such means as an average farmer can command. Costly implements and expensive methods found in use on farms are beyond the means of our farmers. Therefore, in order to win the cultivators to improved methods of farming, the experiments that are to be carried on at the farm should be simple and within the capacity of the farmers to adopt.

There are practically no gardens or fruit trees in the villages. So the farm should grow grafts of such fruits as may be suitable to the local climate and distribute them to the villagers at moderate rates, and see that they are planted systematically on the villagers' farms

*Activities of the Unit Organisation*

*Agricultural Improvements*:—(1) Economic holding; (2) Good manuring; (3) Irrigation; (4) Co-operative methods of farming and marketing, are the main activities for developing agriculture.

(*1*) *Economic holding*: Experts are of opinion that 32 bighas of Pohri, which is nearly 20 acres of land for a family of 5 members, makes an economic holding. Out of 383 families in these villages 60 are in service or in other occupations, and the cultivated land for 323 families is 5573 bighas which comes to 17·3 bighas per family. Now if we bring 685 bighas of good waste and 1000 bighas of poor land under cultivation and improve it with proper manuring and irrigation, we shall have in all 5574+685+1000 i.e. 7259 bighas for cultivation purposes. This land, if equally distributed in economic units of 32 bighas per family, will be sufficient for 207 families. The remaining 176 families should be shifted to industries and services in order to create a proper balance between agriculture and industry.

Further, the land should be divided according to the consumption of the people. Land should be allotted for cultivating cereals, pulses, oil-seeds, fruits, sugarcane, cotton and vegetables. The present distribution seems to be justifiable except that there are no orchards or fruit trees, or green fodder crops for animals. The new land which is to be brought under cultivation is such that it can only grow oil-seeds in the first year and bajra the next year.

(2) *Good Manuring* :—The manure of 3,600 cattle if well preserved will be sufficient for 1/4 of the cultivated land. Oil-seeds are grown in large quantities in this area, and if their oil is extracted locally the oil cake will be sufficient to manure 1/8 of the land. Green manure of sun-hemp should be produced for fertilising lands. Preparing compost manure by Achariya's method in shallow pits, or on the ground with urine earth should be introduced among the farmers.

(3) *Irrigation* :—There are two good tanks side by side, one in Jakhnod and the other in Baraipura. There are also 60 wells in these villages; but very little use is made of them for irrigational purposes. Idleness, ignorance, lack of means and absence of a spirit of co-operation among the people prevent them from taking advantage of the existing facilities or creating new ones. The two tanks need a good deal of repair to make them fit to store sufficient water for extensive irrigation. If repaired, and the silt deposits are removed, these tanks have the capacity to irrigate 400 bighas of land. With deep excavation of soil and raising the height of the bund by one foot, the catchment area of the tank can be greatly extended. It will then be able to store three times the quantity of water it has now, and about 1200 bighas of land in the adjoining 4 villages of Jakhnod, Baraipura, Nayagaon and Krishnaganj will be irrigated.

Now out of 60 wells only 13 are being partly made use of, for irrigational purposes. By constant propaganda and active direction from local Panchayats, the village people can be roused to co-operative effort for self-improvement. To begin with, all the existing 60 wells in the area should

be made full use of. Some 90 more wells will have to be dug at suitable places to increase irrigational facilities in these villages. Both old and new wells, 150 in all, will, at the rate of one well for every 12 bighas of land, be sufficient to irrigate 1800 bighas in the area. This, together with 1200 bighas to be irrigated by the two tanks, will make up an aggregate total of 3000 bighas, which means 20 times more irrigational facilities than what the villages have at present. Increase of irrigational facilities is the surest way of raising the agricultural output by 100%, but large-scale irrigational development pre-supposes State initiative and drive.

(4) *Collective and Co-operative Farming* :—It is too early to introduce collective farming in this area. All that should be done at this stage is that division of land below 20 acres should be stopped by legislation, and people should be persuaded to exchange their small and scattered pieces so as to create compact economic holdings.

Co-operative farming may be started on the new land that is to be brought under cultivation. Similarly, co-operative credit facilities, co-operative grain and seed stores, and co-operative marketing, are other activities which may advantageously be started. The spirit of co-operative working should be introduced in as many aspects of life as possible.

It is estimated that in 10 years' time, there is every possibility of increasing the agricultural income of this area by 150% if the plan is worked out with full vigour and the foregoing methods of agricultural development are put into effect. The gross agricultural income of 10 villages, which at present stands at Rs. 1,96,669 will at the end of 10 years be raised to Rs. 4,91,672, i. e., about 5 lakhs a year, while the expenditure, which at the moment is Rs, 91,600 will also be increased by another lakh of rupees. The present expenditure and the increased expenditure when the plan is in full operation will be as follows:—

| | Present Expenditure | Increase in Expenditure |
|---|---|---|
| Revenue | Rs. 9,100 | Rs. 1,800 |
| Harot | 900 | 200 |
| Labourers | 10,000 | 10,000 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Seeds | 20,000 | 10,000 |
| Maintenance of bullocks | 50,000 | 25,000 |
| Implements | 600 | 2,000 |
| Marketing | 1,000 | 1,000 |
| Manures | ... | 30,000 |
| Irrigation | ... | 20,000 |
| | Rs. 91,600/- | Rs. 1,00,000/- |

That is, total expenditure on agricultural operations will be Rs. 1,91,600/- per year. Out of gross income of Rs. 4,91,672/- less Rs. 1,91,600/- the net agricultural income of the villages will be Rs. 3,00,072/-. The income of Rs. 3,00,072/- when divided between 207 agricultural families will give Rs. 24/- per head per month at the end of 10 years.

*IV. Cattle-Breeding and Dairy Industry*:—

Feeding, breeding, health and care of cattle are the three items which can make the dairy industry an economic proposition to the villagers.

*Feeding*:—There are enough pasture lands in the villages and in the nearby jungles. But they provide grazing for only 4 months during the monsoon. The fodder stocked by the villagers for eight months is insufficient. Mixed farming is not in vogue, and nobody grows green fodder for animals. No grains and oil cakes are given to the cattle as feed, not even to milking cows or working bullocks. The villagers spend little on cattle and therefore get very little in return. In order to make cattle-breeding an economic proposition, it is necessary to make use of a large variety of feeds.

All coarse feeds or roughages such as hay and straw, silage, etc., and all concentrates such as seeds or seed by-products like oil-cakes, groundnuts, gingelly, linseed and cotton seeds, should be given to cattle. All milch cattle require diet that is somewhat laxative and their daily ration should always contain a small quantity of either barn or cake.

As a rule, the villagers should stock two cart loads of hay per head of cattle. As far as possible green fodder should be given throughout the year, and the silo-method should be adopted. Even green grass cut in time keeps well

and sweet in silage. In the time of scarcity of green fodder, silage serves the purpose.

*Breeding* :—It has been found by experience that increase in milk yield is due more to better stud bulls than to cows. Bulls may be selected from local stock. All bulls of poor stock in the villages should be castrated. Veterinary aid must be provided to the fullest extent for cattle diseases.

10 bulls are sufficient for 500 cows and 8 buffalo bulls for 300 buffaloes. 2 bulls and 2 buffalo bulls may be separately maintained at the central farm.

Today out of 511 cows in the villages 130 are in milk. There are 361 buffaloes of which 90 are giving milk. Besides, there are 875 goats, 210 sheep, 783 bullocks and 856 calves. Statistics maintained by the village centres in this area reveal that of the aggregate income, agriculture contributes 65% while 15% is contributed by cattle-breeding and dairying. With improved agriculture at the end of 10 years, we have already estimated that the per capita income of the agriculturist will rise up to Rs. 24 per month. And likewise, it is safe to assume that with scientific breeding and dairy-farming, cattle wealth would be able to maintain the same proportion of its contribution to national wealth as it does today, i. e. about 1/5 of the agricultural income or about Rs. 5 per month. But as cattle are maintained both by the agricultural and the non-agricultural population, the income derived from them will have to be distributed over the entire population of 1913 in the area. Therefore, at the end of 10 years, the per capita income from dairy industry will be in the neighbourhood of Rs. 3 per head per month.

*V. Cottage and Village Industries* :—

As mentioned earlier, out of 383 families in this area, 176 should be taken over to cottage industries and services. A plan of distribution of 176 families in non-agricultural occupations, cottage crafts and social services, is outlined as follows. This distribution is based both on the resources of the place and the requirements of the population :—

| Serial No. | Occupations | Families |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Priests (preachers) | 5 |
| 2. | Teachers | 10 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 3. | Village and development workers | 20 |
| 4. | Doctors, nurses and physicians | 2 |
| 5. | Banias (shopkeepers) | 10 |
| 6. | Confectioners | 2 |
| 7. | Perfume, Soap and Oil manufacturers | 2 |
| 8. | *Betal* or *pan* seller | 1 |
| 9. | Dyers and printers (cloth) | 2 |
| 10. | Goldsmiths | 4 |
| 11. | Blacksmiths | 5 |
| 12. | Copper and brass vessel makers | 2 |
| 13. | Tailors | 4 |
| 14. | Weavers and spinners | 25 |
| 15. | Carders | 2 |
| 16. | Carpenters | 8 |
| 17. | Masons (building workers) | 5 |
| 18. | Stone breakers and menders | 4 |
| 19. | Potters | 6 |
| 20. | Telis (oilmen) | 8 |
| 21. | Shepherds and wool weavers | 5 |
| 22. | Barbers | 4 |
| 23. | Kagdies (paper makers) | 4 |
| 24. | Washermen | 4 |
| 25. | Cobblers | 14 |
| 26. | Basors (bamboo workers) | 3 |
| 27. | Sweepers (bhangis) | 5 |
| 28. | Postal and other Public services | 10 |
| | Total | 176 |

A demand for cottage products should be created. The price of cottage produced articles will have to be maintained at a lower level than machine-made goods, either by raising the price of the latter by high taxation or lowering the price of the former by subsidy and State concession.

Cloth, paper, oil, leather goods and brass vessels particularly need this sort of State protection.

*Cloth Self-Sufficiency*:—In order to make the 2,000 population of this unit of villages self-supporting in cloth, 60,000 yards of cloth is required. This quantity of cloth approximately requires local production of cotton to the

extent of 750 mds. a year. At present only 60 bighas of land is used for cotton cultivation, which produces 120 mds. of cotton in this area. So, there is deficit in the needed quantity of cotton to the extent of 630 mds. a year, for which at least 300 bighas of new land will have to be brought under cotton cultivation.

The Panchayat of the unit should through propaganda and persuasion make every housewife understand her responsibility to spin yarn for the clothing requirements of the family. Each family of 5 should on an average spin 20 seers of yarn towards cloth-sufficiency of the family. This should be supplemented by families of whole-time spinners. 25 to 30 whole-time working weavers in the course of a year can weave all this yarn into cloth by producing 2,000 yards each per year.

*Oil Industry*: This area already produces about 300 mds. of oil-seeds including groundnuts. Fresh lands that are to be brought under cultivation are such that only oil-seeds and bajra can be grown on them. This practically will double oil-seed production in these villages, and will give 2,200 mds. of oil and 3,300 mds. of oilcake. Today all this quantity of oil-seed and groundnut is being exported outside Pohri, depriving both cattle and soil of their substantial food, and rendering the families of local oilmen without work and wages. Both in the interest of development of the oil and allied industries of soap-making, etc., and also for preserving oilcake for supplying manure to the soil for increased agricultural production, the development of this industry has great importance for this area.

*Jungle Produce and Forest Industries*:—These villages abound in large forests. Some of the jungle tribes, namely, 'Bhils', live mostly on forest produce. Fuel, charcoal making and honey extraction provide employment to them, but more possibilities in this direction have yet to be explored. Quite a number of people can find work and wages in forest industries.

The transfer of families from agriculture to industries and non-agricultural occupations as recommended in this plan is a revolutionary step in socio-economic reconstruction of rural areas, and it presupposes State initiative and drive in a

very large measure. Local Panchayats and leaders in villages will have to play an important part in preparing the minds of the villagers to accept these revolutionary changes. The distribution of families amongst the various crafts and non-agricultural occupations is only suggestive, and may be altered to suit local demands in future.

*VI. Housing and new Outlay of Villages :—*

The present size and population of the villages is very small. It is difficult to benefit this scattered population in small groups by concentrating development activities at any point or centre. Distribution of a small population of 1913 souls in 10 villages is in itself a great impediment to the reconstruction of rural life of the future. I, therefore, propose resettlement of these villages in larger units. Like consolidation of holdings into economic units, this amalgamation of small villages into a big one is an essential step for the rehabilitation of social and economic life in villages. An area of 4 square miles may be a reasonable unit for the resettlement of a village of the future with no less than one thousand population. For it is humanly impossible to provide either facilities for civilized life or easy means of communication to the people so long as the village population remains hopelessly scattered as it is today.

If this basis of re-settlement of improved villages is accepted, the 10 villages of the present should be re-grouped into 2 villages of the future with the following arrangement and distribution of population :—

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Krishnaganj and Katra | 559 | 5. | Gwalipura | 264 |
| 2. | Khod | 86 | 6. | Behta | 162 |
| 3. | Jakhnod | 421 | 7. | Behti | 151 |
| 4. | Nayagaon | 79 | 8. | Randhir | 65 |
| | | | 9. | Sonipura | 91 |
| | | | 10. | Bagadia | 35 |
| | | 1145 | + | | 768 = 1913 |

Reconstruction of village life essentially means rebuilding of villages on a new model. They should be situated on a better site, connected with metalled road and built according

to modern ideas of lay-out. A Pachayatghar and a library should be situated in the centre of the village and all useful village institutions such as Temple, School, Hospital or Aushadhalaya, Cottage Industries Institute, Co-operative Store, etc., should be built at appropriate places providing convenience and comfort to the population. There should be proper drainage on both sides of the roads to drain the water out of the village. There should be wells at convenient spots. The housing arrangement should conform to a new model. Every village home must have a sitting or drawing room, two bed rooms, one store room and a kitchen on one side, and a latrine and bath-room on the other. The court-yard must be spacious enough to grow fruit trees, flower plants and a kitchen garden. The rooms must have windows for light and ventilation. The cattle-sheds must be separated from the residential houses of the people. And the housewife must be trained in home decoration and in maintaining proper sanitation of home and surroundings. Clean and sanitary surroundings and bright homes will contribute immensely to bringing about a change in the psychology of the villagers and making them progressive-minded.

Approximate expenditure for constructing a house on the new model will be about Rs. 1,200. Cattle-shed will cost another Rs. 300, i.e., Rs. 1,500/- in all. This house will ordinarily last for 50 years if not a hundred. The house building expenditure will, therefore, be Rs. 50 per family per year or about Re. 1 per head per month.

*Health and Medical Aid:*—At Krishnaganj there should be a dispensary, and a cottage Ayurvedic Aushadhalaya at Gwalipura. There should be a qualified doctor at Krishnaganj, a qualified lady doctor specialised in maternity, 2 compounders, 1 nurse and 2 peons. There should also be arrangement for 5 beds for maternity cases. At Gwalipura there should be a Vaidya to give necessary medical aid to that group of villages, and a peon. The Vaidya, a compounder and the nurse should each pay health-visits to one village every day, inspect the sanitation of the villages and of the village homes, enquire into the health condition of the villagers by house to house visits, and provide medical aid on the spot to those who

need it. The doctor should pay health-visits to the villages once a week and particulary attend to serious cases.

The modern conception of health and medical service is that the State should ensure health and healthy conditions of existence to the people. Rather than that people should go about and seek medical help, it is the duty of the State to provide it to everyone of its citizens wherever he or she happens to be.

The dispensary equipment including building, furniture and instruments will cost about Rs. 10,000. This amount when distributed over ten years comes to Rs. 84 as non-recurring expenditure per month. Recurring expenditure for the salary of the staff and for medicnes will be as follows :—

| Designation | Salary Rs. |
|---|---|
| 1. Doctor | 100 |
| 2. Lady Doctor | 60 |
| 3. Nurse | 40 |
| 4. Vaidya | 40 |
| 5. Compounders 2 | 50 |
| 6. Peons 4 | 60 |
| 7. Medicine per month | 250 |
| | 600 |

In all Rs. 600+84 or Rs. 684 will be the monthly expenditure over the head of health and medical help, which works out at As. 6 per head per month. If expenses over maternity ward and indoor patients, approximately about Rs. 150 per month, are also added, the expenditure in all will be about Rs. 10,000 a year or annas 8 per head per month.

*Education*:—In the course of this plan, it has been stated that the standard of literacy in this unit of villages is 4·5 per cent. among males and only 3 per cent. among females. Educational reconstruction of village life means complete liquidation of illiteracy from amongst the masses and making them cent per cent literate, both males and females. Taking compulsory primary education as our starting point, 15 per cent of the population which consists of young boys and girls between the ages of 6 and 15 should

be provided facilities for primary and secondary education. The number of boys and girls of school-going age in a population of 2,000 will be in the neighbourhood of 300. About a hundred out of these are already receiving education in the Adarsh Vidyalaya, and further provision can be made to accommodate the rest of the 200 boys and girls if they are brought to school. The central location of the Adarsh Vidyalaya in the midst of all these villages, eminently makes it the best educational institute for the area. Since no village is more than one and a half miles away from this Vidyalaya, all boys and girls of school-going age can conveniently receive their schooling here. Efforts have already been made by this Vidyalaya to bring all boys and girls of these villages for education. All that will be needed will be to increase the present staff by half a dozen men and women teachers to cope with the growing student population.

For adult literacy, classes may be started in the villages in the evening and teachers of this Vidyalaya may conduct these classes, for which they should be paid Rs. 5/- to 10/- as extra allowance. Women teachers should likewise hold adult classes for women along with imparting training in spinning and other handicrafts in the afternoon, for which they should be paid similar allowances.

The Adarsh Vidyalaya already spends between Rs. 6,000 to 8,000 a year on education. With addition to its staff because of increased student population and with provision of extra allowances for conducting classes in villages it can efficiently meet the educational needs of this area. The additional expenditure over these activities will be between Rs. 3,000 and 4,000 which brings the total to Rs. 10,000 a year or about annas 8 per head per month.

*Co-operation* :—The success of any village development plan mainly depends on Education and Co-operation. The problem of rural reconstruction will not be solved by merely tackling rural life in compartments. The villagers should be brought within the compass of co-operative effort, and a simultaneous drive from all sides should be made to raise the level of their economic and moral well-being. An organised effort should be made for better farming and better business,

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helping the villagers at the same time to overcome various disabilities under which they suffer. Full fledged multi-purpose societies should be started to regulate and control completely the economic life of the villagers. Their old debts must be liquidated by the co-operative organisation. The amount should be realised from them by reasonable long-term instalments. The Co-operative Marketing Society should arrange to sell the villagers' produce at profitable rates and supply them consumer goods through co-operative stores.

The villager must be taught by the co-operative society to practice thrift and cut down his unproductive expenditure. The solvency of the society lies in the solvency of the agricultural masses through their prudence and providence, and the productivity of their labour. In short, all economic and social activities of the villagers should be organised on a co-operative basis, and appropriate societies to regulate all these activities should be started.

This unit should start a Village Co-operative Bank, a Co-operative Grain Store, a Marketing Society and a Village Co-operative Store, and more such institutions may be added later according to the increasing demands of the people. The co-operative head of the organisation should see to it that these institutions function efficiently and in the right spirit.

Since the salvation of the poor and the disorganised farming community lies in co-operation, all possible efforts should be made to foster the spirit of co-operative enterprise in every aspect of the villagers' life. The village people should be organised to do free labour for social and economic betterment of the village community, and to that end all activities of house-building, construction of village roads, digging wells putting bunds over streams, should be organised on the basis of co-operation.

*VII. The Village and Group Panchayat:—*

In the course of this plan, it has been proposed to amalgamate small villages and create a new village with a much larger population. Accordingly, it will be advisable to have only one group Panchayat in this unit of villages, or at the most two in the two groups of villages proposed in this plan

These Panchayats should be elective bodies, and members to them should be elected on the basis of adult franchise of the villagers every year. There should be at least two members elected from every village for the group or unit Panchayat. And three out of these elected members of the Panchayat should be members of the Executive Committee of the 'Krishnaganj Unit Development Association.'

Independently, these Panchayats should function as organisations responsible for the complete administration of the civic and economic life of the village or villages under their jurisdiction. They should be statutory Panchayats, with powers to levy taxes, raise funds, administer the civic, legislative and economic affairs of the village. In order to make the working of these Panchayats effective and efficient, they should be vested with the responsibility to manage the administration of the area and work for the improvement of the entire population. This devolution of power, with all failures and set backs that are inherent in such a process, is the only way to make people responsible and self-respecting. And in order to cover all these administrative expenses 50 per cent of the revenue realised in the area should remain with the Panchayats with powers to raise more money, if needed for purposes of development.

The members of the Panchayats forming the executive of the Unit Development Association should be encouraged and guided by responsible workers of this organisation to take interest and initiative in various development plans being launched for their advancement. They should not be allowed to remain as passive spectators, while all initiative is retained by official workers. The workers should make it a point to inspire the local Panchayat to do all the thinking and if possible planning for themselves, for ultimately it is they who will have to shoulder the responsibility, and, therefore, their interest in what is being done for them should necessarily be awakened.

*VIII. Men and money required for the operation of the plan:—*

Taking 10 years as the period of operation of this plan in this unit of 2,000 population, it is estimated, it will need about Rs. 50,000 a year or Rupees 5 lakhs for the full

working of the plan. Similarly, when in full working order the organisational machinery of the plan will need the services of 50 people. It is difficult to estimate accurately without making a detailed survey of the existing conditions of the area. These estimates too will have to undergo a good deal of change in the light of day-to-day experiences during the progress of the plan.

However, it is safe to calculate on a sum of Rs. 50,000 as annual working expenses of the plan. The heads of expenditure may be divided as follows.

| Serial No. | Heads of Expenditure | Annual Budget Rs. |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Irrigational projects and agricultural development | 15,000 |
| 2. | Assets earmarked for co-operative activities and industrial development | 5,000 |
| 3. | Housing, Village roads, etc. | 10,000 |
| 4. | Health and medical aid | 10,000 |
| 5. | Education | 10,000 |
| | Total | 50,000 a year |

*Resources* :—A comprehensive and all-sided development plan pre-supposes State drive and State resources coupled with State Legislation whenever needed. For, the State alone can raise loans by borrowing, levy taxes on the people and compel them to do free labour for the community. All these methods will have to be devised to raise money for financing the plan and seeing it executed.

*Conclusion* :—The age in which we live is the age of planning. A new world order and a new structure of society is in the course of formation. And the new structure envisaged is the one which promises justice and happiness to the common man who has been a sufferer for centuries. If freedom from want to the common man is the supreme objective of the world of future, it is only possible through

large-scale development of natural resources hitherto untapped. This requires large-scale expenditure and full employment of available human energy to the ends of exploiting nature's gifts to man.

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